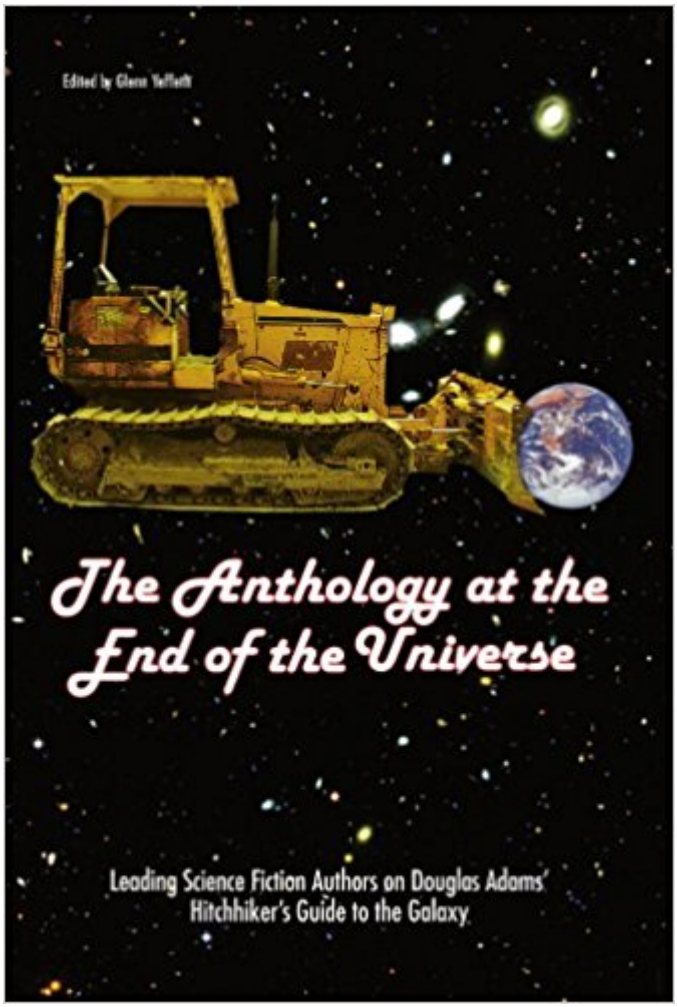
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The Anthology At The End Of The Universe: Leading Science Fiction Authors On Douglas Adams' The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy (Smart Pop Series)




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Synopsis

Every aspect of the science fiction classicÃ Â The Hitchhiker's Guide to the GalaxyÃ Â is analyzed in a variety of quirky ways in this collection of essays. Topics include the logistics of the restaurant at the end of the universe, how the Internet is creating the real Hitchhiker's Guide, an assessment of Vogon poetry, and an analysis of computing. The essays are written by both science fiction greats, such as Cory Doctorow, Lawrence Watt-Evans, Stephen Baxter, Jacqueline Carey, and Alastair Reynolds, and up-and-coming writers.

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Customer Reviews

Glenn Yeffeth is the editor of Seven Seasons of Buffy and Taking the Red Pill: Science, Philosophy and Religion in The Matrix. He lives in Dallas, Texas.

If you like the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and feel like it's worthy of serious critical attention then this is about as close are you are going to get. The essays in this book are clearly written with love and admiration for the series and the collection is a fantastic companion to the novels, especially if it's been a while since you've read the books want to have your love for Adams' work renewed. While this book isn't critical analysis it is written by real authors who provide interesting and insightful takes on the material and the impact the series had on our culture. I highly recommend this.

These authors take you through the 5-book Trilogy (although they mostly focus on the first 3 books) in a series of essays. They are all light hearted, but some of them are more serious that others. It also includes a great interview of Douglas Adams from the 80s.I had a lot of fun with the book and remembering my favorite scenes. The essays also helped me see different interpretations of the actions of the characters. I recommend it for the bookshelf of any H2G2 fan!

The book covers tons of details, from how important food is to the series, to computer design, the meaning of life, the meaning of 42, Marvin's place in the universe, Vogon poetry and even British humor. At under 199 pages, this tiny book seems to cover a lot, but I feel they could have done so much more. There is so much to debate and think about when it comes to Adam's universe that this book barely peeled off the first layer of the massive tome. But maybe we should leave some mystery for future readers to find and enjoy on their own?To list just SOME of the contributors whose work is within these pages we have Stephen Baxter, Susan Sizemore and Adam Roberts.

Twenty essays make up The Anthology at the End of the Universe and each author basically tries to tell us what is so important about the 5 book Hitchhiker's Guide trilogy. It's sort of like the old joke about the blind men each trying to describe an elephant when they each had only a small piece of the animal in their grip. No one essay can be expected to give you a definitive answer as to what the Hitchhiker's Guide is truly about or what Douglas Adams' message was when he wrote it. What the essays do is give you an understanding of why the books are so popular and how so many people have found a place for them in their lives and hearts.Some of these essays had me laughing out loud so that I had to read those parts to my husband to prove I hadn't really gone off the deep end. Other's had me wondering about how you could come up with such serious connections from a series of comedic science fiction books. Then there were the essays that had me saying, "hmm, never thought of that". And of course, being me, there were the essays that had me sniffling discreetly into a tissue. There's a lot to like in this collection of essays. However, they are essays rather than short stories and if you're looking for the latter this book is not for you.Mike Byrne in "Beware of the Leopard", Cory Doctorow in "Wikipedia: A Genuine H2G2 - Minus the Editor, and Bruce Bethke in " The Secret Symbiosis: The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy and Its Impact on Real Computer Science" talk about the impact that Hitchhiker's Guide has had on computer science, computer interface design, the internet as a communications media, and the impetus it was in starting many young people on a career in the sciences. The Guide in the television version, while

done with colored gels and press on letters was heads and shoulders above what computers at the time were capable of achieving. Once people saw what a really good user interface could be like they demanded better than they had and the computer companies listened. In some ways, we have Douglas Adams to thank for the usability of computers because once users began to think there could be something better they demanded it.Others see the Hitchhiker's Guide as a round about way to think of the truly important things in life: religion, humor, 42, looking at the world as it is. The following essays dealt more with the philosophical aspects of the books: "That About Wraps it up for Oolon Colluphid" by Don Debrandt; "The Holy Trilogy" by Selina Rosen (this one is so funny it should have a spew alert); "The Zen of 42" by Marie-Catherine Caillava.No book about the Guide could be complete without a mention of Vogon poetry. Lawrence Watt-Evans in "A Consideration of Certain Aspects of Vogon Poetry" discusses the merits of quantifying poetry so that the Guide can equivocally say that Vogon poetry is the third worst. He also wonders about Arthur's seeming immunity to it.Adam Roberts in "42" and Jacqueline Carey in "Yes, I Got It" discuss the philosophy of humor and its place in our lives. While Susan Sizemore in "You Can't Go Home Again, Damn It! Even If Your Planet Hasn't Been Blown Up by Vogons" realizes that the person she was when first exposed to the Guide and the person she is now do not view the Guide in the same way. Even with all the happy memories of that first reading, she finds that it doesn't have the same impact now as it did then.Food, food, glorious food. Douglas Adams loved a good meal especially with good friends and food plays an important role in the Hitchhiker's Guide. The role of food is touched upon by Steven Baxter in "Lunching at the Eschaton: Douglas Adams and the End of the Universe in Science Fiction", A.M. Dellamonica in "Digital Watches May Be a Pretty Neat Idea, But Peanuts and Beer Are What Get You Through the Apocalypse".When the world or universe is off kilter or just plain crazy, how do you remain sane when all about you are crazy? Well, some writers have evidently come up with some ideas on how to remain sane in a crazy world from their reading of the Guide: "The Subversive Dismal Scientist: Douglas Adams and the Rule of Unreason" by Vox Day; "Another Fine Mess" by Adam Troy Castro; "The Only Sane Man in the Universe" by Marguerite Krause; "Douglas Adams and the Wisdom of Madness" by John Shirley; and "Loop-Surface Security: The Image of the Towel in a Vagabond Universe - A Semiotic (Semi-Odd) Excursion" by Mark W. Tiedemann.There's also an interview with Douglas Adam by John Shirley ("A Talk with Douglas Adams"). Amy Berner in "Words to Live " talks about how everything she needed to learn to life live she learned from the Hitchhiker's Guide. "Goodnight, Marvin" by Maria Alexander is the final essay in the book and a touching tribute to Douglas as a person who touched many of our lives with his writing.

Many of the essays in this nicely produced book are good. The pieces I would single out for particular praise are (in no particular order, or rather in the order in which these appear in the book) the ones by these authors: Mike Byrne; Cory Doctorow; Adam Roberts; and Vox Day (that last name being a pseudonym . .). Those essays illuminate Hitchhiker's and Adams and also aspects of the Whole Sort of General Mish-Mash. Sometimes they are funny, too.PS: My copy of the book does not seem to show its publication date. But it does seem to be 2005, as the page says.

Absolutely hilarious! Makes me want to listen to the radio broadcast all over again.

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