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The Fantastic NEW YORK TIMES Bestseller by the
Author of MOSTLY HARMLESS

DOUGLAS ADAMS

THE LONG DARK TEA-TIME OF THE SOUL



"A RIOTOUS CONCOCTION."

— Los Angeles Times
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Douglas Adams :

**The Long Dark
Tea-Time of the Soul**

Scanned and corrected by the world-famous Dirk Gently.

You can find me on iRC.

Pls send me GREETs in your diskmag/demo :)

I'm interested (scanning!) in c00l books. Books, articles, dictionaries etc... in Finnish and Estonian are preferred.

This file is in (MS-LOSS) WORD format. Try NOT to convert it to plain TEXT file, and DO NOT REMOVE my ScanRight!

I recommend you using WinWord with 2 coloumns and condensed prop chars with size 8 or with noncondensed/prop/6. If you are rich enough, you can use noncondensed ones with char sizes 9-10, but with only ONE coloumn!

Version 1.01, second, corrected release (it was a real pain in the ass to scan/correct this book, as the printing was VERY lame)

**Another Dirk Gently-scans, under correction, to be released s00n:
Maailmanlopun Ravintola (Finnish - Restaurant at the end...)
El,,m,, Maailmankaikkeus ja Kaikki (Finnish - Life, the Universe...)
Lord of the Rings (English) (Full!)
Teach yourself Japanese (English)
Teach yourself Finnish (English)**

I'm looking for help to correct LOTR. I don't have time to do it (1500 pages and LOTS of scan-errors). If you feel brave enough to correct it, let me know! :-) Of course I send the book to you via snail-mail as well!

Dirk Gently has nowadays released:

Neil Gaiman: Don't Panic

Douglas Adams: Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency

When a passenger check-in desk at Terminal Two, Heathrow Airport, shot up through the roof engulfed in a ball of orange flame the usual people tried to claim responsibility. First the IRA, then the PLO and the Gas Board. Even British Nuclear Fuels rushed out a statement to the effect that the situation was completely under control, that it was a one in a million chance, that there was hardly any radioactive leakage at all, and that the site of the explosion would make a nice location for a day out with the kids and a picnic, before finally having to admit that it wasn't actually anything to do with them at all.

No rational cause could be found for the explosion - it was simply designated an act of god. But, thinks Dirk Gently, which God? And why? What God would be hanging around Terminal Two of Heathrow Airport trying to chatch the 15.37 to Oslo.

Funnier than Psycho... more chilling than Jeeves Takes Charge... shorter than War and Peace... the new Dirk Gently novel, The Long Dark Teatime of the Soul.

Douglas Adams is the best-selling author of the Hitch Hiker books: The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe, Life, the Universe and Everything, So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish, and Mostly Harmless.

The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy has appeared in more forms than one might reasonably expect, most of which flatly contradict each other. It has appeared as a BBC radio series (its original form), a BBC TV series, all sorts of different records, cassettes, and CD's, a computer game, and also, apotheotically, a bath towel. A series of graphic novels is currently in preparation, and the motion-picture version is confidently expected any decade now.

He is also the author of the Dirk Gently books, Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency and The Long Dark Tea-Time of the Soul. He is currently working on another book in this series.

He has also written The Deeper Meaning of Liff with John

Lloyd and, most recently, the travel and wildlife book Last Chance to See, with Mark Carwardine. He is making more TV programmes these days and also frequently lectures on computers and semi-extinct parrots.

He lives partly in Islington, London, partly in Provence, France, but mostly in airport bookstalls.

Also by Douglas Adams in Pan Books

**The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy
The Restaurant at the End of the Universe
Life, the Universe and Everything
So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish
Mostly Harmless**

Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency

**With John Lloyd
The Deeper Meaning of Liff**

**With Mark Carwardine
Last Chance to See**

Douglas Adams

**The Long Dark
Tea-Time of the Soul**

**Pan Books
in association with William Heinemann
For Jane**

This book was written and typeset on an Apple Macintosh II

and an Apple LaserWriter II NTX. The word processing software was FullWrite Professional from Ashton Tate. The final proofing and photosetting was done by The Last Word, London SW6.

I would like to say an enormous thank you to my amazing and wonderful editor, Sue Freestone.

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Chapter 1

It can hardly be a coincidence that no language on Earth has ever produced the expression "as pretty as an airport".

Airports are ugly. Some are very ugly. Some attain a degree of ugliness that can only be the result of a special effort. This ugliness arises because airports are full of people who are tired, cross, and have just discovered that their luggage has landed in Murmansk (Murmansk airport is the only known exception to this otherwise infallible rule), and architects have on the whole tried to reflect this in their designs.

They have sought to highlight the tiredness and crossness motif with brutal shapes and nerve jangling colours, to make effortless the business of separating the traveller for ever from his or her luggage or loved ones, to confuse the traveller with arrows that appear to point at the windows, distant tie racks, or the current position of Ursa Minor in the night sky, and wherever possible to expose the plumbing on the grounds that it is functional, and conceal the location of the departure gates,

presumably on the grounds that they are not.

Caught in the middle of a sea of hazy light and a sea of hazy noise, Kate Schechter stood and doubted.

All the way out of London to Heathrow she had suffered from doubt. She was not a superstitious person, or even a religious person. she was simply someone who was not at all sure she should be flying to Norway. But she was finding it increasingly easy to believe that God, if there was a God, and if it was remotely possible that any godlike being who could order the disposition of particles at the creation of the Universe would also be interested in directing traffic on the M4, did not want her to fly to Norway either. All the trouble with the tickets, finding a next-door neighbour to look after the cat, then finding the cat so it could be looked after by the next-door neighbour, the sudden leak in the roof, the missing wallet, the weather, the unexpected death of the next-door neighbour, the pregnancy of the cat - it all had the semblance of an orchestrated campaign of obstruction which had begun to assume godlike proportions.

Even the taxi-driver - when she had eventually found a taxi- had said, "Norway? What you want to go there for?" And when she hadn't instantly said, "'The aurora borealis!" or "Fjords!" but had looked doubtful for a moment and bitten her lip, he had said, "I know, I bet it's some bloke dragging you out there. Tell you what, tell him to stuff it. Go to Tenerife."

There was an idea.

Tenerife.

Or even, she dared to think for a fleeting second, home.

She had stared dumbly out of the taxi window at the angry tangles of traffic and thought that however cold and miserable the weather was here, that was nothing to what it would be like in Norway.

Or, indeed, at home. Home would be about as icebound as Norway right now. Icebound, and punctuated with geysers of steam bursting out of the ground, catching in the frigid air and dissipating between the glacial cliff faces of Sixth Avenue.

A quick glance at the itinerary Kate had pursued in the course of her thirty years would reveal her without any doubt to be a New Yorker. For though she had lived in the city very little, most of her life had been spent at a constant distance from it. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Europe, and a period of distracted wandering around South America five years ago following the loss of her newly named husband, Luke, in a New York taxi-hailing accident.

She enjoyed the notion that New York was home, and that she missed it, but in fact the only thing she really missed was pizza. And not just any old pizza, but the sort of pizza they brought to your door if you phoned them up and asked them to. That was the only real pizza. Pizza that you had to go out and sit at a table staring at red paper napkins for wasn't real pizza however much extra pepperoni and anchovy they put on it.

London was the place she liked living in most, apart, of course, from the pizza problem, which drove her crazy. Why would no one deliver pizza? Why did no one understand that it was fundamental to the whole nature of pizza that it arrived at your front door in a hot cardboard box? That you slithered it out of greaseproof paper and ate it in folded slices in front of the TV? What was the fundamental flaw in the stupid, stuck-up, sluggardly English that they couldn't grasp this simple principle? For some odd reason it was the one frustration she could never learn simply to live with and accept, and about once a month or so she would get very depressed, phone a pizza restaurant, order the biggest, most lavish pizza she could describe - pizza with an extra pizza on it, essentially - and then, sweetly, ask them to deliver it.

"To what?"

"Deliver. Let me give you the address - "

"I don't understand. Aren't you going to come and pick it up?"

"No. Aren't you going to deliver? My address - "

"Er, we don't do that, miss."

"Don't do what?"

"Er, deliver. . ."

"You don't deliver? Am I hearing you correctly... ?"

The exchange would quickly degenerate into an ugly slanging match which would leave her feeling drained and shaky, but much, much better the following morning. In all other respects she was one of the most sweet-natured people you could hope to meet.

But today was testing her to the limit.

There had been terrible traffic jams on the motorway, and when the distant flash of blue lights made it clear that the cause was an accident somewhere ahead of them Kate had become more tense and had stared fixedly out of the other window as eventually they had crawled past it.

The taxi-driver had been bad-tempered when at last he had dropped her off because she didn't have the right money, and there was a lot of disgruntled hunting through tight trouser pockets before he was eventually able to find change for her. The atmosphere was heavy and thundery and now, standing in the middle of the main check-in concourse at Terminal Two, Heathrow Airport, she could not find the check-in desk for her flight to Oslo.

She stood very still for a moment, breathing calmly and deeply and trying not to think of Jean-Philippe.

Jean-Philippe was, as the taxi-driver had correctly guessed, the reason why she was going to Norway, but was also the reason why she was convinced that Norway was not at all a good place for her to go. Thinking of him therefore made her head oscillate and it seemed best not to think about him at all but simply to go to Norway as if that was where she happened to be going anyway. She would then be terribly surprised to bump into him at whatever hotel it was he had written on the card that was tucked into the side pocket of her handbag.

In fact she would be surprised to find him there anyway. What she would be much more likely to find was a message from him saying that he had been unexpectedly called away to Guatemala, Seoul or Tenerife and that he would call her from

there. Jean-Philippe was the most continually absent person she had ever met. In this he was the culmination of a series. Since she had lost Luke to the great yellow Chevrolet she had been oddly dependent on the rather vacant emotions that a succession of self-absorbed men had inspired in her.

She tried to shut all this out of her mind, and even shut her eyes for a second. She wished that when she opened them again there would be a sign in front of her saying "This way for Norway" which she could simply follow without needing to think about it or anything else ever again. This, she reflected, in a continuation of her earlier train of thought, was presumably how religions got started, and must be the reason why so many sects hang around airports looking for converts. They know that people there are at their most vulnerable and perplexed, and ready to accept any kind of guidance.

Kate opened her eyes again and was, of course, disappointed. But then a second or two later there was a momentary parting in a long surging wave of cross Germans in inexplicable yellow polo shirts and through it she had a brief glimpse of the check-in desk for Oslo. Lugging her garment bag on to her shoulder, she made her way towards it.

There was just one other person before her in the line at the desk and he, it turned out, was having trouble or perhaps making it.

He was a large man, impressively large and well-built - even expertly built - but he was also definitely odd-looking in a way that Kate couldn't quite deal with. She couldn't even say what it was that was odd about him, only that she was immediately inclined not to include him on her list of things to think about at the moment. She remembered reading an article which had explained that the central processing unit of the human brain only had seven memory registers, which meant that if you had seven things in your mind at the same time and then thought of something else, one of the other seven would instantly drop out.

In quick succession she thought about whether or not she was likely to catch the plane, about whether it was just her

imagination that the day was a particularly bloody one, about airline staff who smile charmingly and are breathtakingly rude, about Duty Free shops which are able to charge much lower prices than ordinary shops but - mysteriously - don't, about whether or not she felt a magazine article about airports coming on which might help pay for the trip, about whether her garment bag would hurt less on her other shoulder and finally, in spite of all her intentions to the contrary, about Jean-Philippe, who was another set of at least seven subtopics all to himself.

The man standing arguing in front of her popped right out of her mind.

It was only the announcement on the airport Tannoy of the last call for her flight to Oslo which forced her attention back to the situation in front of her.

The large man was making trouble about the fact that he hadn't been given a first class seat reservation. It had just transpired that the reason for this was that he didn't in fact have a first class ticket.

Kate's spirits sank to the very bottom of her being and began to prowl around there making a low growling noise.

It now transpired that the man in front of her didn't actually have a ticket at all, and the argument then began to range freely and angrily over such topics as the physical appearance of the airline :heck-in girl, her qualities as a person, theories about her ancestors, speculations as to what surprises the future might have in store for her and the airline for which she worked, and finally lit by chance on the happy subject of the man's credit card.

He didn't have one.

Further discussions ensued, and had to do with cheques, and why the airline did not accept them.

Kate took a long, slow, murderous look at her watch.

"Excuse me," she said, interrupting the transactions. "Is this going to take long? I have to catch the Oslo flight."

"I'm just dealing with this gentleman," said the girl, "I'll be with you in just one second."