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Dear Douglas Adams,

There was a time when Arthur Dent and I had a lot in common. Neither of us knew where our towels were. We both led fairly ordinary lives. We both could feel the universal paranoia that whoever was behind the controls of Life, the Universe, and Everything was tad off kilter in the gray matter region. I'm not sure if Arthur ever worried about the "Answer to Life," at least not consciously. I did.

Imagine my consternation after reading your series The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy and discovering that the Ultimate Answer to the Ultimate Question of Life, the Universe, and Everything was actually "42" and had been supplied by a computer built by beings who, in our own dimension, are mice. The reason you must imagine my consternation is because I didn't have any. I felt more like, "Oh, well, that's alright then." Why not, after all, just go mad? In the universe we live in, this has probably already happened. It actually makes sense that this planet we call "Earth" just might be an organic computer programmed to find a Question to fit the Ultimate Answer and operated by mice, if, indeed, according to Wonko the Sane, we must include instructions on a packet of toothpicks. In a universe where planets get demolished to make way for hyperspace bypasses, silliness is indeed the last refuge for the doomed. So long as one knows where one's towel is.

Now that I think about it, "Always know where your towel is" is the most useful advice I think I've ever heard. If ever I am cold, I can use a towel as a blanket. If ever I am hot, I can use a towel as a sunshade. If ever I feel the urge to wear a turban, I can rap a towel around my head. If danger threatens, I can use a towel as a blindfold so I won't have to see anything frightening. If soaked in water and twirled around itself, a towel may even be used for defensive purposes. Perhaps the greatest function of a towel is its incredibly simple ability to eliminate wetness upon one's person. To know the location of one's towel is to be prepared for anything. To know the locations of one's towel is to be in complete control of any situation. To know the location of one's towel is to be one totally hoopy frood.

I'm not sure of the exact moment I found my towel. I think it might have been when Slartibartfast told Arthur, "...I'd far rather be happy than right any day," before going onto admit that he usually wasn't. Weather not he wasn't happy or wasn't right is something only you, the author, will ever know. The rest of us readers must figure it out for ourselves. I think knowing the answer to questions like that is called wisdom; something my elders tell comes with age. If this is true, then age must also come with wisdom. Personally, I would rather stay young and happy knowing my towel is in reach, then be old and always right.

I no longer care about who is at the controls of Life, the Universe, and Everything. Even though he, she, or it probably does know the Ultimate Answer and the Ultimate Question.

I must admit I now agree with Prak when he stated that it is impossible that both can be known about the same universe, or the Question and Answer will just cancel each other out and replace the universe with something even more bizarre and inexplicable. Like you said, this has probably already happened. We all might as well quit arguing about what's more depressing than Marvin the Paranoid Android and have a little fun. Now, zark off. I seem to have misplaced my towel.

Zarguon bless you,
Kyle Soyer

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