



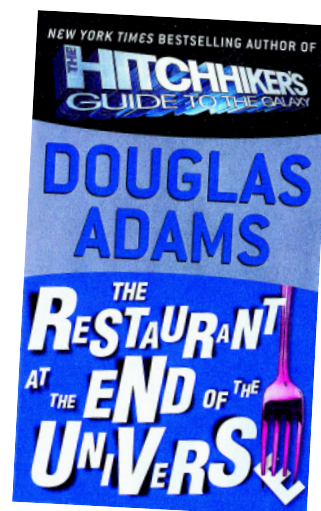
**Denise Chávez** (\*1948) grew up in Las Cruces, New Mexico, with her father's family and in Far West, Texas, with her mother's family. A novelist, short story writer, playwright, actress, and teacher, Chávez had earned degrees in drama and creative writing at several universities. She has been a Professor at Northern New Mexico Community College, The College of Santa Fe, the University of Houston, and New Mexico State University. Concentrating nowadays on her many activities and involvements in community life, Chávez has served as the Artistic Director of the Border Book Festival, which is a major national and regional book festival in the Southwest, and is, for example, also the founder of "Sin Fronteras"/Writers without Borders. Having received numerous awards, Chávez is also the author of the novels *The Woman Who Knew the Language of Animals* (1992), *Face of an Angel* (1994), and most recently the memoir *A Taco Testimony: Meditations on Family, Food and Culture* (2006).

# 12

Douglas Adams

## *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*

"Don't panic" is the slogan printed on many books by Douglas Adams best known as the author of the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series. Adams takes the reader far away into space in the future. The main characters in the second volume of the series, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe*, are again Arthur Dent and Trillian, the only two survivors of the Earth's demolition. Arthur is with Zaphod Beeblebrox, who has two heads and three arms and is the president of the galaxy. Zaphod is the friend of Ford Prefect, who is the writer of the guide and has lived on Earth for 15 years. Ford Prefect is a friend of Arthur Dent, who, because he is a human being has to not only eat and drink but also has very earthly ideas about it. The excerpt is taken from the second volume of the Hitchhiker series: Douglas Adams, *The Restaurant at the End of the Universe* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005 [1980]), pp. 9–12.



1 A short while before this, Arthur Dent had set out from his cabin in search of a cup of tea. It was not a quest he embarked upon with a great deal of optimism, because he knew that the only source of hot drinks on

5 the entire ship was a benighted piece of equipment produced by the Sirius Cybernetics Corporation. It was called a Nutri-Matic Drinks Synthesizer, and he had encountered it before.

It claimed to produce the widest possible range of

10 drinks personally matched to the tastes and metabolism of whoever cared to use it. When put to the test, however, it invariably produced a plastic cup filled with a liquid that was almost, but not quite, entirely unlike tea.

15 He attempted to reason with the thing.  
"Tea," he said.

"Share and Enjoy," the machine replied and provided him with yet another cup of the sickly liquid.

He threw it away.

"Share and Enjoy," the machine repeated and

20 provided him with another one.

"Share and Enjoy" is the company motto of the hugely successful Sirius Cybernetics Corporation Complaints division, which now covers the major land

25 masses of three medium-size planets and is the only part of the Corporation to have shown a consistent profit in recent years. [...]

Arthur threw away a sixth cup of the liquid.

"Listen, you machine," he said, "you claim you can synthesize any drink in existence, so why do you keep

30 giving me the same undrinkable stuff?"

"Nutrition and pleasurable sense data," burred the machine. "Share and Enjoy."

"It tastes filthy!"

35 "If you have enjoyed the experience of this drink," continued the machine, "why not share it with your friends?"

"Because," said Arthur tartly, "I want to keep them. Will you try to comprehend what I'm telling you? That drink..."

40 "That drink," said the machine sweetly, "was individually tailored to meet your personal requirements for nutrition and pleasure."

"Ah," said Arthur, "so I'm a masochist on a diet am I?"

"Share and Enjoy."

"Oh shut up."

"Will that be all?"

Arthur decided to give up.

50 "Yes," he said.

Then he decided he'd be damned if he'd give up.



"This is not my cup of tea"

## Vocabulary

**3 to embark** (v.): to go onto a ship or a plane, or to put or take s.th. on to a ship or plane – **5 benighted** (adj.): *literary* having no knowledge or understanding – **10 metabolism** (n.): the chemical processes by which food is changed into energy in your body – **30 to synthesize** (also -ise BrE) (v.): here: to make s.th. by combining different things or substances – **38 tart** (adj.): a reply, remark etc that is sharp and unkind – **42 to tailor** (v.): to make s.th. so that it is exactly right for s.o.'s particular needs or for a particular purpose – **67 to squirt** (v.): if you squirt liquid or if it squirts somewhere, it is forced out in a thin fast stream – **70 terse** (adj.): /tɜːs/ a terse reply, message, etc. uses very few words and often shows that

"No," he said, "look, it's very, very simple ... all I want ... is a cup of tea. You are going to make one for me. Keep quiet and listen."

And he sat. He told the Nutri-Matic about India, he told it about China, he told it about Ceylon. He told it about broad leaves drying in the sun. He told it about silver teapots. He told it about summer afternoons on the lawn. He told it about putting in the milk before the tea so it wouldn't get scalded. He even told it (briefly) about the history of the East India Company.

"So that's it, is it?" said the Nutri-Matic when he had finished.

"Yes," said Arthur, "that is what I want."

"You want the taste of dried leaves boiled in water?"

"Er, yes. With milk."

"Squirted out of a cow?"

"Well, in a manner of speaking I suppose ..."

"I'm going to need some help with this one," said the machine tersely. All the cheerful burbling had dropped out of its voice and it now meant business.

"Well, anything I can do," said Arthur.

"You've done quite enough," the Nutri-Matic informed him.

It summoned up the ship's computer.

"Hi there!" said the ship's computer.

The Nutri-Matic explained about tea to the ship's computer. The computer boggled, linked logic circuits with the Nutri-Matic and together they lapsed into a grim silence.

Arthur watched and waited for a while, but nothing further happened.

He thumped it, but still nothing happened.

Eventually he gave up and wandered up to the bridge. In the empty wastes of space, the *Heart of Gold* hung still. Around it blazed the billion pinpricks of the Galaxy. Towards it crept the ugly yellow lump of the Vogon ship.

you are annoyed – **83 to thump** (v.): here: to hit against s.th. loudly – **86 pinprick** (n.): a very small area or dot of s.th. – **87 lump** (n.): a small piece of s.th. solid, without a particular shape

## Explanation

**85 Heart of Gold:** the name of the spaceship on which Arthur Dent travels. The ship's name refers to a song by Neil Young from the album *Harvest*: "I've been to Hollywood / I've been to Redwood / I've crossed the ocean for a heart of gold."