

Towel Day - Thursday, May 25th

by Rev. Joe Dirt - Tuesday, May 23, 2023

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Okay, okay, okay... I am recycling this article as I am still waiting with my towel for that spaceship to pick me up – otherwise beam me up Scotty, it is too, too weird down here for me as of late.

Even a casual fan of science fiction is well aware of [*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*](#) and its sequels by Douglas Adams. As literature they are no great shakes, but as entertainment they work very well. They have made a movie and tried a TV series. I generally like the books better than the movie and it holds in this case.

The basic premise is that just before earth is destroyed to make room for a new interstellar highway, the protagonist, Arthur Dent, and his friend hitchhike a ride on a passing space ship. Up to this point Dent did not know his friend was an alien. There is a super computer that has been working on a problem for many millennia, what is the meaning of life. Of course, many adventures and comedic happenings ensue over the 5 books as they hitchhike around the galaxy and the meaning of life is searched for.

As a celebration of the author and his books, May 25 has been declared Towel Day. Don't forget to carry yours.

From Adams' *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*:

A towel, it says, is about the most massively useful thing an interstellar hitchhiker can have. Partly it has

great practical value. You can wrap it around you for warmth as you bound across the cold moons of Jaglan Beta; you can lie on it on the brilliant marble-sanded beaches of Santruginus V, inhaling the heady sea vapours; you can sleep under it beneath the stars which shine so redly on the desert world of Kakrafoon; use it to sail a miniraft down the slow heavy River Moth; wet it for use in hand-to-hand-combat; wrap it round your head to ward off noxious fumes or avoid the gaze of the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal (such a mind-bogglingly stupid animal, it assumes that if you can't see it, it can't see you — daft as a brush, but very very ravenous); you can wave your towel in emergencies as a distress signal, and of course dry yourself off with it if it still seems to be clean enough.

More importantly, a towel has immense psychological value. For some reason, if a strag (strag: non-hitch hiker) discovers that a hitchhiker has his towel with him, he will automatically assume that he is also in possession of a toothbrush, face flannel, soap, tin of biscuits, flask, compass, map, ball of string, gnat spray, wet weather gear, space suit etc., etc. Furthermore, the strag will then happily lend the hitch hiker any of these or a dozen other items that the hitch hiker might accidentally have “lost.” What the strag will think is that any man who can hitch the length and breadth of the galaxy, rough it, slum it, struggle against terrible odds, win through, and still knows where his towel is, is clearly a man to be reckoned with.

Hence a phrase that has passed into hitchhiking slang, as in “Hey, you sass that hoopy Ford Prefect? There’s a frood who really knows where his towel is.”

And yes I know Jenna Coleman is from Doctor Who, his companion Clara. HOWEVER, any picture with Jenna in it works for me. This was from a Collectormania event, in Milton Keynes, England.

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