

ZZ9 PLURAL Z ALPHA

PRESENTS

QUESTIONABLE GUIDANCE



a few buttons at random

RESULTS OF THE GREAT GUIDE GIVEAWAY
OF JUNE 2025

What's this?

ZZ9 held another Competition?

Through the month of June 2025, ZZ9 ran the [Great Guide Entry Giveaway](#), with a Champagne Standard Edition of The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy courtesy of Curious King on offer to win.

Published here are a selection of entries, for your enjoyment and guidance (of the questionable kind).

To ensure some degree of anticipation is kept as you read, the winner of the contest will not be revealed on this page.



(This special edition barely missed it's original July deadline, before making it out in, uh, early Oct 2025!)

The ZZ9 Website!

We've got a website, with information and stuff!

Homepage <https://zz9.org>
Membership renewals <https://zz9.org/membership/>
News <https://zz9.org/news/>
Events <https://zz9.org/diary/>
Social Media <https://zz9.org/social/>



Artwork Credits...

Cover	Gary Gianni	Arthur pacing on Magrathea
P7,8	Curious King	Various product banners
P10	Gary Gianni	White Mice calculating
P11	Prodigal	Playing cards render

Gary Gianni's illustrations from
the forthcoming Curious King edition of Hitchhiker's

THE SMALL PRINT

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ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha has written permission from Douglas Adams and his agent to call ourselves "The official Hitch Hiker's Guide To The Galaxy Appreciation Society". ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha is a non-profit organisation (well, organisation is putting it a bit strongly).

ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha undertakes that no member's personal information is given to any third party outside of ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha. The only information about members held by the society is that supplied by the member on their membership/renewal form(s). If the member has consented on their form(s), Local Group Organisers may be supplied with their name and address (only) for the purpose of organising a Local Group. For more details of how ZZ9 uses members' information, or for a copy of your information held by the Society, contact the Membership Secretary.

A wholly remarkable book

In many of the more relaxed civilizations on the Outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy, the Hitch Hiker's Guide has already supplanted the great Encyclopedia Galactica as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom, for though it has many omissions and contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects.

First, it is slightly cheaper; and secondly it has the words Don't Panic inscribed in large friendly letters on its cover.

— Douglas Adams. *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Prologue

...This is not the story of that book. But it is the story of some of the lives inspired by it. Inspired to share their own nuggets of knowledge and wisdom. (Also inspired by ZZ9's Great Guide Entry Giveaway competition, but who's counting?)

It has the words "Don't Panic" on the (back) cover in what we hope are considered large friendly letters. Plus it's free, which should qualify it as suitably cheap.

Without further ado, the entries!

MATTER DISINTEGRATOR

The most widely known matter disintegrator is most easily constructed from a three-bar heater and a rendition of the "Queen of the Night" aria, sung by [Diana Damrau](#). This fact was discovered by David Harvey, of Roundshaw, near Croydon, England, Earth, some years before the planet was destroyed.

David was listening to the aria on a cold winter night and accidentally put his coffee down at the precisely-required distance between the heater and his laptop speakers. His mug, the coffee and the fully-contained marshmallows instantly disappeared. Only the tops of the marshmallows floating above the rim of the mug remained.

Note: the disappearance occurred fifty-three seconds into the playing of the video. Very few people have been known to listen much longer than this.

Given the vast expanse of the universe (see the Guide entry re Chemists), this experiment has been repeated on millions of occasions but has not been fully documented elsewhere than the Guide. The precise wattage of the heater and the musical composition of the aria have not been fully identified other than in the examples given in the appendix to this entry.

The fact that these experiments result in a matter transporter, rather than an actual disintegrator, is known only to the people of Jayscondel VI, whose entire economy is based on the astonishing assortment of objects that appear atop a particular mountain at various times during the day and night. Their prayers to the great god Omnifacutous do not in fact have any effect but no-one is about to stop now, not when they seem to be on to a good thing.

— Willo Hanri

CRYPTIC CROSSWORDS

The cryptic crossword is a form of torture developed only on the most depraved planets in the galaxy to have developed a written linguistic culture, such as Faframox Gamma, Kelper-37e, and, formerly, Earth.

Unlike a simple definitional crossword,¹ where the answer WAR CRIME may be clued by, say, 'Treaty law violation', 'Disaster Area concert tour' or 'Vogon poetry recital', that part of a cryptic clue is generally supplemented by wording ostensibly giving a second route to the answer via its spelling and/or pronunciation.

In theory, this makes the clue easier, but in practice it can turn the entire exercise into the most sanity-warping time hoover since the Ultimate Halls of Fashion on the planet Oopsilon Watamilike decreed that no Oopsilonian could be seen in public without having first measured and tagged in ascending length order each and every hair on their (exceedingly hairy) body.

The reason this extra information actually makes life harder for the solver is that it gives the setter (compiler/constructor/tormentor) leeway and permission to disguise which part of the clue actually is the definition, and/or in what sense the definition is being used.

Even the definition may be grammatically devious, such as when 'flower' is used to indicate not a bloom on a plant but a thing that flows (a river), 'butter' not a dairy spread but a thing that butts (a goat), or 'wicked item' not something evil but something possessing a wick (a candle).

Additionally, the wordplay part of the clue is subject to a number of constructional rules or conventions that the solver just has to learn as they go along, and the decades-long quest to master these is the sole reason so many respectable journalists are perennially late filing copy (and not, as is often supposed, that they are out drinking and dancing).

Types of wordplay that can be used alone or (commonly) in combination include (but are not limited to):

- CHARADE – the answer is broken down into smaller parts, which are defined in order. These parts include shorter words, but also abbreviations and initials, if they are supported by dictionaries and/or common use.

- SECOND DEFINITION – clueing a different meaning of the answer word from the primary definition.

(These are the only two that don't require an 'indicator' word or phrase hinting to the solver what sort of wordplay is being used.)

- ANAGRAM – the letters of the answer are jumbled into another word or phrase, referred to as 'anagram fodder'. An 'anagram indicator' (anagrind – pronounced 'Anna grinned') typically suggests wrongness, disorder, or reassembly.
- HIDDEN (or TELESCOPIC) – the answer is presented unjumbled, in plain sight within some longer word or phrase, typically with different word breaks. A 'hidden indicator' is used to imply that the longer phrase owns, contains, or hides the answer.
- CONTAINER AND CONTENTS – if the answer can be seen to be made up of one word inside another, these are defined individually with a similar indicator implying containment or enclosure.
- DELETION – if the answer can be assembled from a longer (etymologically unrelated) word with one or more letters removed from it, the longer word is defined and an indicator given suggesting that the deleted letters are lost, abandoned, destroyed, etc. See also BITS & PIECES below.
- BITS & PIECES – individual letters or small clusters of letters in the answer may be indicated with reference to their position in some other word. 'Head of...', 'top of...', or 'leader of...' may indicate the first letter of the next word; 'heart of' can mean the one or two letters in the exact middle of it; 'odd characters' can mean alternate letters starting with the first; 'periodically' or 'on occasion' can mean every second (or third, or fourth...) letter without specifying a starting point, and so on. Which leads us to...
- ACROSTIC – initial letters of a string of words in the clue spell out the answer; indicated by a term such as 'initially', 'at first', etc.
- REVERSAL – where the answer or some part of it is another word written backwards, this is marked with an indicator such as 'returning', 'going west', or (in a down clue) 'on the up'.

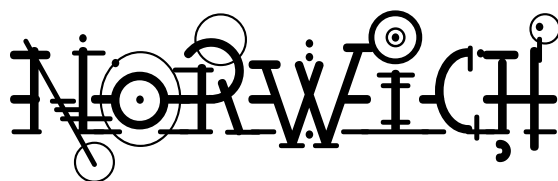
In all these cases, the wordplay comes at one end of the clue and the definition at the other; though the order, length of each, and demarcation between them may be disguised. There are two clue types where this does not hold true:

- CRYPTIC DEFINITION (or DAD JOKE) – No wordplay, just a groanworthy humorous definition. Indicates the setter is a frustrated comedian.
- &LIT (short for 'and literally') – The whole clue is the wordplay, but somehow also simultaneously the definition. Indicates the setter is an insufferable smartarse. While it is true that the setter of the Sidereal Daily Mentioner's puzzle is also a lexicographer for the Maximegalon Hyperdictionary, any suggestions that previously unknown words appearing in the latter were coined specifically to solve a gridfilling problem in the former have been strenuously denied (and, furthermore, vollexipated).

¹ Attempts to introduce any form of crossword to the planet Tersurus have proved fruitless, although they do enjoy news farticles and other such guff.

While most crosswords use two-dimensional square grids, a few Earth-based setters occasionally try cubic ones. Only the Pizmatic Morgomites from the fifth moon of Yubb regularly set and solve tesseract puzzles, and the only non-trivial 5d puzzle ever created was set by the supercomputer Deep Thought in the time between calculating the Ultimate Answer and being asked to deliver it. Unfortunately, the only possible gridfill contained six words so staggeringly offensive that no publication would consider running it. It is rumoured that Deep Thought has supplied the solution to Wowbagger the Infinitely Prolonged, who is said to be storing it up for a particularly deserving recipient when he gets to the 'Tr...'s, but nobody knows who this might be referring to.

— Dave Williams



A village which is under the delusion that it's a city. Situated in the middle of a marsh filled county on the eastern side of England.

Norwich has enough pubs to keep even the most dedicated of beer drinkers happy.

People here still seem to think that we live in feudal times. May be likely to hold a rebellion against either the church or the landed gentry. They have done this before. The scorch marks are still visible on the arch leading to the cathedral.

Elm Hill has neither elm trees nor signs of a hill.

Monks can still be heard chanting in the Blackfriars Hall. This has been confirmed by early morning cleaners. It is very difficult to get rid of monks.

The Norman Castle has dungeons which are no longer in use but you can go down into them. Just make sure the guide lets you out again.

Norwich lead the way in non conforming dead people. England's first non conformist cemetery is open to the public. Recommended for Goth types.

Best coffee house; 68k.Coffee for computer geeks who understand the joke.

Shops here still sell vinyl records. No one is really sure why.

— F.D

INTERMISSION

We Interrupt Your Educational (*really?* -Ed) Reading Experience
To Bring You These Important And Worthwhile Messages

About ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha

ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha is a club for fans of Douglas Adams's Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. We organise meetings for members around the UK (and occasionally in other countries), produce a magazine four times a year, and offer a range of Guide-related merchandise available to members by post. (At least we do when we have a merchandise officer.)

Our membership is varied and diverse, encompassing the widest range of humanity (and, quite likely, inhumanity) imaginable. Our youngest ever member was not even born, and our oldest has pushed 70.

Besides the prestige of being a member of the best and greatest appreciation society the Galaxy has ever known, membership of ZZ9 will entitle you to partake in the democratic election of the committee, and to all the following:

MOSTLY HARMLESS

The society's quarterly newsletter is cram-packed with news, reviews, articles, rants, research and other amazing things. Published as regularly as clockwork – albeit clockwork that has trouble deciding which order it should go through the seconds – this is an unmissable tool for all aficionados of Douglas Adams's work.

MERCHANDISE

We stock and distribute a range of Hitchhiker's-related merchandise – from T-shirts to Beeblebears – that is available by mail order to members only. (Currently sending our merchandise again since we DO have a merchandise officer!)

SOCIAL GATHERINGS

ZZ9 is a social experience. Originally formed as an excuse to get together and re-appreciate the works of one Douglas Adams, it continues the grand tradition of bringing people together.

With monthly social gatherings, weekend slouches, occasional parties and annual picnics (Beeblebear and Towel), as well as mass attendance of Science Fiction conventions, ZZ9 is a way of life.

It is life.

Be part of it by [becoming a member](#).



About Curious King

Curious King is a limited run publisher based in Manchester, UK that focuses on Fine Press editions of SciFi, Fantasy and Contemporary Fiction.

They are known for using the finest materials, artisan craftsman and the most incredible artists in the industry – their approach to each project is both creative and innovative.

Collectors of their editions span the globe and they have sold their books in the US, UK, Australia, Europe, South America and Asia.



On the topic of publishing Hitchhiker's...

This has been a labour of love for nearly two years now and is without doubt one of the most iconic pieces of Sci-Fi literature written.

Securing the rights to publish a fine press version of this hilarious tale has been a genuine highlight for me since I started Curious King back in 2021.

It is without doubt one of my publishing holy grails and I still have to pinch myself that it's actually here!

To have Gary Gianni agree to illustrate this book was another incredible win, and to my mind he is absolutely the perfect person to take this on, and his work has certainly proved me right.

— excerpt from

<https://curiousking.co.uk/hitchhikers-guide-book-release/>



**CURIOUS
KING**



Also I'm pleased to announce that the original Zaphod Beeblebrox, Mark Wing-Davey will be contributing an afterword and signing these editions! Mark played Zaphod in the radio show as well as the BBC TV series and was a very good friend of Douglas Adams having been on many family holidays with him and his family.

It really felt right to have someone from the original radio show as it preceded the novel and feels canon to us here at CK. Mark is a wonderful chap and we're really pleased to have his contribution to this release!

— excerpt from

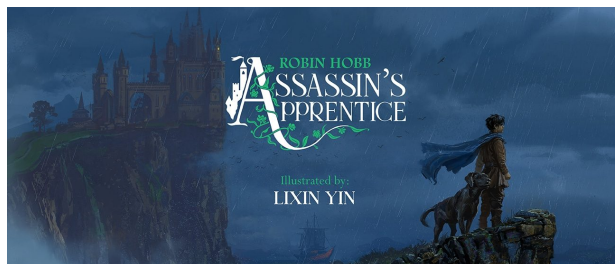
<https://curiousking.co.uk/april-2025-production-update/>

Select other Curious King Publications

ASSASSIN'S APPRENTICE – ROBIN HOBB

ILLUSTRATED BY LIXIN YIN

Assassin's Apprentice is the debut novel of Robin Hobb and the first book in *The Farseer Trilogy*. Set in the fictional Six Duchies, it follows FitzChivalry Farseer, a royal bastard trained as an assassin.



THE MARTIAN – ANDY WEIR

ILLUSTRATED BY YIXING ZHANG

The Martian follows astronaut Mark Watney, who becomes stranded alone on Mars after a fierce dust storm forces his crew to evacuate, believing him dead. With limited supplies and no way to communicate with Earth, Watney must rely on science, ingenuity, and resourcefulness to survive the harsh Martian environment.

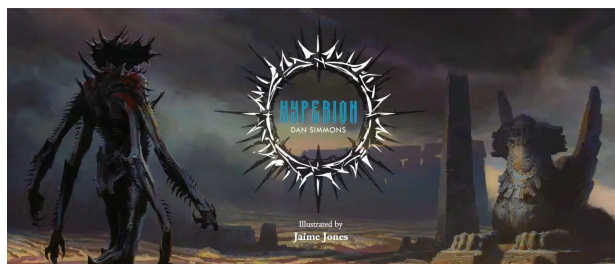


HYPERION – DAN SIMMONS

ILLUSTRATED BY JAIME JONES

Set in a sprawling interstellar universe, this novel invites readers on a thought-provoking pilgrimage, where ancient mysteries and modern dilemmas converge.

Curious King also publishes the sequel: *The Fall of Hyperion* (also illustrated by Jaime).



THE FIRST LAW TRILOGY – JOE ABERCROMBIE

An epic journey where the line between heroism and villainy blurs, and the fate of nations hangs in the balance.

The Blade Itself
Before They Are Hanged
Last Argument of Kings

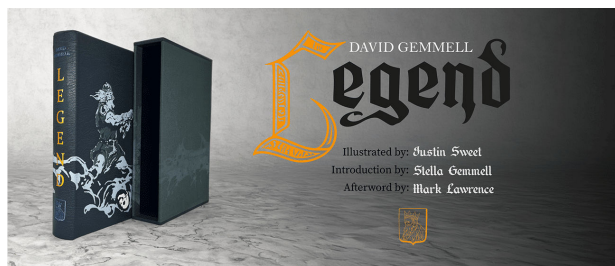
Illustrated by Tommy Arnold, Vance Kovacs and Greg Manchess respectively.



LEGEND – DAVID GEMMELL

ILLUSTRATED BY JUSTIN SWEET

Legend is the debut novel by David Gemmell. Set in the war-torn world of Drenai, it centres around the defense of the fortress of Dros Delnoch. Facing a massive invasion, the Drenai people are in desperate need of a hero. Enter Druss the Legend, an ageing warrior of legendary status, who comes out of retirement to lead the defense.



Curious King publish updates each month detailing the latest both for books already in the pipeline, and announcing forthcoming titles: <https://curiousking.co.uk/blog/>

END OF INTERMISSION

Back to everything you never wanted to find out, but can't look away from!

MANCHESTER UNITED

Manchester United are one of those football clubs with a long and varied history, much of it quite illustrious and glittering with silverware. My fascination (which may as well be the word from which 'fan', the short form used to describe fanatical followers, not just of football clubs but also of individual célébrité, was distilled), dear readers, began in 1997. I was immediately drawn to their red and white home kit colors, the same as my School's Colors. Incidentally, we [the Lawrence School, Sanawar, which deserves its own A Life Afloat Volume 2 chapter - but more on that later] celebrated our sesquicentenary that year. David Beckham's graceful play saw him get graced with the great number 7 shirt, worn previously by Eric Cantona and George Best. Then came that historic 1999 Champions League win over Bayern Munich, and my heart was set on being a Red Devil for life. And now in 2025, 28 years have passed. But rewind a bit, and...

Cut to 23 years later. As annus horribilis, 2020, the Horrendo[vir]us Year of the Crown, wound down, 2021, the Year of Hope, Year 1 of After Covid Era, dawned bright and new. In the case of Manchester United, both phases of our earth completing another spiral around our sun went well, despite being eliminated from the Champions League and hence erasing all hopes of a treble three-peat. For those of my esteemed readers unfamiliar with footballing terminology, a treble in (European) football is when a team wins both domestic titles (the top-flight league and the knockout competition) in addition to the Champions League of Europe.

History repeated itself in 2022 as Man U were sent packing at Old Trafford, the Theater of Dreams, by Atletico Madrid, despite the return of the talisman, Cristiano Ronaldo, the inheritor of the coveted Number 7 shirt, who could not do much by way of rescuing the Red Devils' annus horribilis. Unfortunately, the slide tackles were only going to go even further downhill on desperation lane.

Statistics about their victories in competitions both domestic and international fail to capture how this team captured its fan following, yours truly included, in the second half of the 20th century. A 1958 airplane disaster in Munich gave new meaning to 'rising like a phoenix from the ashes' under Sir Matt Busby, culminating in top-notch performance over the next decades. The 1990s saw a new money-making scheme result in a top-flight Premier League, which new manager Sir Alex Ferguson's Fledglings dominated. By the end of his era after more than a quarter of a century in charge of the team, SAF had stamped his authority on all, including kicking a boot at Beckham's head!

After Sir Alex, things were never the same. Red Devils fans throughout our mostly harmless planet keep on hoping that the next manager will bring back the glory days...or the next, coming to the present manager at the time of writing, Ruben Amorim, who may get more time than his predecessors to build a legacy worthy of succeeding Sir Alex's.

Only time will tell, as is the case with all things. Sports, like life, are utterly unpredictable. Happy hitchhiking! Visit Old Trafford if you happen to go that way, footballer froods!

— Aradhya Ackshatt

CARDBOARD BOX

Next to a towel, a cardboard box is the second-most useful thing in the universe.

The people of Earth ([hyperlink removed due to planet destruction](#)) were the most oblivious, moronic and possibly most obnoxious race in the galaxy (pending clarification from the Pan-Galactic Gargle-Blaster's Book of Multiverse Records) but they did recognise the value of the cardboard box.

Boxes were originally presumed by most races to be receptacles for the containment and potential shipping of items. However, on Earth, specifically in Britain (see also: United Kingdom, Great Britain, the 51st State) it was quickly understood that they had a far greater purpose.

The cardboard box can be used as:

- A vehicle
- A fort
- A helmet
- A punishment cell
- A cunning disguise in the event of alien contact
- Cheap housing for small furry creatures
- And even makeshift electrical items, such as televisions and radios.

(All pictures removed due to concerns that, in the event of a copy of the Guide falling through a wormhole in space and appearing on a previous or future Earth, semi-intelligent beings may be confused to distraction or, worse still, attempt litigation due to copyright infringement.)

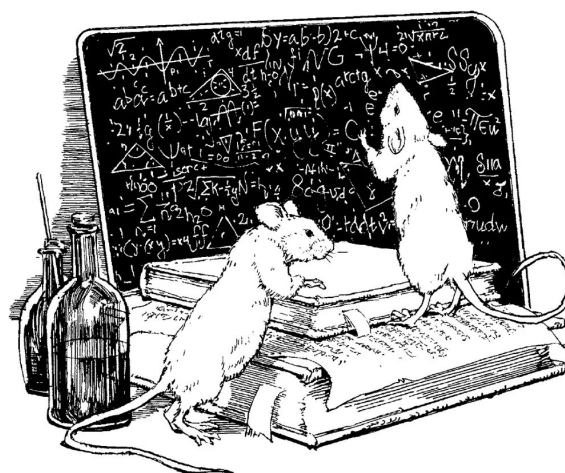
It has been suggested that, unfortunately, intelligent Earth beings (see also: mice, dolphins, some humans) never managed to harness the full potential of the cardboard box, which led to their ultimate destruction to make way for something infinitely more useful. Speculation has arisen that if cardboard boxes had identified themselves as interstellar travellers from Sqornshellous Delta and had formed a symbiotic relationship with the planet's inhabitants, not only would Earth still exist but the interdimensional abilities of boxes could have led to many Earth beings leading much more groovy lives (particularly the mice, less so the dolphins - cardboard boxes lose structural integrity in water and would have posed a possible extinction threat).

Fortunately the cardboard box continues to thrive on its home planet and, due to its magnanimous nature, frequently arrives unbidden on planets across the known universe, often carrying gifts of toys or home goods, and immediately makes itself useful for the greater good of all in its vicinity.

Further reading on cardboard boxes:

- *'Our Life as Stunt-boxes'* - the stunning true-life account of a family of boxes who appeared in countless cop shows being crashed into by getaway vehicles
- *'Rip It Up and Start Again'* - a self-help journal for broken boxes
- *'And They're All Made Out of Ticky-Tacky'* - the controversial creation story of the cardboard box (banned across the known universe for subversive ideas).

— Blue Canary



Hitchhiker's - The Playing Cards



Arvind Ethan David mentions in the introduction (chapter 2) of the audiobook lots of other Hitchhiker's projects he is working on. This list does not include one that is "launching soon" according to its Kickstarter page, namely the Playing Cards (see above) which are being drawn by Jack Brutus Penny. For details see:

<https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/prodigoal-ent/the-hitchhikers-guide-to-the-galaxy-playing-cards>

The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy Live

The playing cards Kickstarter states they are being "produced in partnership with the forthcoming official Hitchhiker show." (see below) This had been teased in Kickstarter updates for the audiobook when they were looking for sponsorship.

A SHOW ABOUT LIFE,
THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING...



COMING NOVEMBER 2025

A pre-release bonus for the audiobook's Kickstarter backers included some of Arvind's interview with Stephen Fry, and he touched on writing a script for the puddle for the immersive show.

At time of writing very little information is available apart from the fact that it opens on Saturday 15th November at Riverside Studios (just down the road from the Hammersmith Apollo) with casting to be announced but with an impressive list of backroom personnel.

Ticket sales started at noon on June 25th. For further details, see the website:

[The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy | Immersive Live Shows](#)

ZZ9 Plural Z Alpha

The Official
Hitchhiker's Guide To The Galaxy
Appreciation Society



THIS ZZ9 SPECIAL PUBLICATION IS DESIGNED TO BE SHARED PUBLICLY

SHARE AND ENJOY

PS: WILLO HANRI WAS THE WINNER OF THE CURIOUS KING ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF
THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY
FOR THEIR ENTRY *MATTER DISINTEGRATOR* (SEE PAGE 3)

"I love deadlines. I like the whooshing sound they make as they fly by" – Douglas Adams