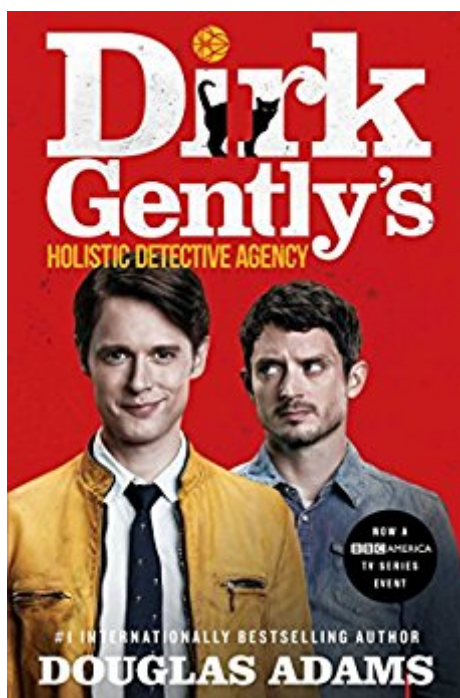


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Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency



Synopsis

From Douglas Adams, the legendary author of one of the most beloved science fiction novels of all time, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, comes a wildly inventive novel—in trade paperback for the first time—of ghosts, time travel, and one detective's mission to save humanity from extinction. **DIRK GENTLY AND HIS HOLISTIC DETECTIVE AGENCY** We solve the whole crime We find the whole person Phone today for the whole solution to your problem (Missing cats and messy divorces a specialty) Douglas Adams, the “master of wacky words and even wackier tales” (Entertainment Weekly) once again boggles the mind with a completely unbelievable story of ghosts, time travel, eccentric computer geniuses, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, the end of the world, and—of course—missing cats.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The 3 hours 1 minute version is abridged. It is okay, it has Douglas Adams' real voice and he reads it extremely well. The only reason I give it only four stars is that there is a 6 hour 40 minute version that is available on CD somewhere. I know this because I borrowed the CDs from Phoenix Public

Library and I have listened to it twice through as well as reading the text twice through. I have also listened to part of the abridged version and the reading seems .. different. I think the abridged version is not simply edited down from the long version, but it actually has a different script, with a few words changed here and there and adams' voice sounds more distracted in the abridged version, more present in the long version. It appears the long version has been sold at this link in the past: [Dirk Gently](#) This is a complicated novel, and to be able to understand it you really need to read it twice, or listen to it twice (or more) and I also needed to read a few blogs to really get it. It's a puzzle. Yes, you can solve the puzzle from the abridged version, but it will be more fun to have all the details. There is also a version with several actors reading for BBC radio, that I tried and didn't like. Look for "Read by the author," and "unabridged" or "6 CD set"

While Douglas Adams is most well know for his Hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxy series, his Dirk Gently series has also been making waves for the past few years. This series features much of Adams trademark humor and hijinx, along with a mountain of call backs to make for a great story. Since this is a box set, the book is divided into two parts, the original 'Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency', and it's sequel, 'the Long Dark Tea Time of the soul'. The first features Richard MacDuff, a software engineer, on the run after a murder. Fortunately, Dirk Gently is a college friend of his and agrees to help him out. For a fee of course. The book incorporates a ridiculous number of sci-fi moments, ridiculous characters, and funny jokes, all of which come back in the end to explain the central mystery. The whole novel is one of the best I've read from Adams. The second book, however, was a bit of a let down. Like the first, the series starts with Dirk investigating a murder, but unlike the first, most of the books humor is Kafka comedy. Dirk is repeatedly assaulted and humiliated, to the point where it stops being funny. The story also wraps up far too quickly to be satisfying, with Deuteragonist Kate not even getting a proper sendoff. Essentially, it had all the same problems that made the last Hitchhikers book bad. I give the first book 5 stars, and the second 3.

Douglas Adams is a great, entertaining writer who brings odd to the forefront. His books often involve normal people being placed in strange, abnormal situations with quirky characters. If you're a BBC watcher, don't worry, this is nothing like the show. We still get the paranormal and Gently's odd approach to detecting, but there's plenty of differences so it doesn't feel like a repeat. There's a charming, very old professor, a slightly confused ghost, your average computer programmer, and then Dirk himself. There are bits that are slow, especially the parts about computers, but skim those areas and keep on. You'll love this entertaining, unique ride.

If you liked *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* you will most likely enjoy this book as well. If you like Terry Pratchett offerings, you will probably feel right at home. If you like droll, mostly understated British humour you will find this a very delightful read indeed. I have been a long time fan of Doug Adams, but somehow overlooked this particular novel until I saw the BBC mini-series of it. What a treat. Thank you, BBC. Mr. Adams certainly knew his way around fantastic and/or absurd situations. Perhaps not as fantastic as *Hitchhiker's Guide*. At least not until toward the end. Still, it's science fictiony enough for the imaginative. I doubt if I am alone in appreciating his facility with the English language. How many authors do you know who could use the phrase "exuberantly prolific loquacity" in a sentence and make it read utterly normally. Personally, I doubt if I have ever even used two out three of those words and certainly not in the same sentence. My advice: don't skim. Take your time to allow all the gags to sweep over you. They are on every page.

Both books start out with confusing goings on that don't make sense, and seem unrelated but then begin to coalesce into a finale which the author doesn't trust the reader to figure out but tells him outright in the closing pages of the book. In the meantime, we are entertained with various puns and word games. The closest outright joke I found was where Dirk gets frustrated over the auto mechanic's inability to fix his car in a timely fashion so he steals the mechanic's truck; parks it a few miles down the road; and waits to take back his fixed vehicle when the mechanic tries to chase him down with his own auto. One also has to be attentive. I loved it when the demon dogs filled the air with their noiseless howling. I'm afraid the puns/jokes are a little nerdy. I enjoyed them, but they were clearly not the type that many would understand.

There is nothing, or mostly nothing, that can't be seen again after a considerable passage of time as if seen for the first time. It's not that it's startlingly new, because there's the lingering image from the first encounter, although faint and growing fainter by the day. The fainting image forms a weak template so that the reader, or at least this reader, has an interesting experience such as "funny, I didn't notice that before" or "so that's how it worked" to "nah, not this time." So you keep reading and wondering if you'll finish these books before more are published only to realize that the only time machine outside your mind that would allow you to think about Adams's future is in Reg's rooms at Cambridge and it broke at the same time as British Telecom fixed the phone.

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