

42: The Wildly Improbable Ideas of Douglas Adams

Kevin Jon Davies

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42: The Wildly Improbable Ideas of Douglas Adams collects a lifetime's worth of the celebrated author's notes, correspondence, and photographs, along with tributes from famous friends.

Beginning with report cards and school pictures, this collection reveals much about the life and creative process of Adams, creator of *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* and *Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency*, two of many endeavors that left a legacy of beloved books, radio shows, television, and movies.

Much of the book consists of handwritten notes by Adams, scanned and reprinted as found, but also transcribed for easier readability. Captions explain the significance of the selected notes and images in context. The choice to present this material in its raw form gives the book a sense of intimacy and offers details a transcription alone could not: cross-outs, doodles, and insights like the changing of ink colors midstream that indicates Adams was inspired in the moment to write a piece on losing ballpoint pens that, years later, still motivates fans to leave pens at his grave. Adams was charming and funny in his written replies to fans, friends, and professionals, and his wit and warmth are evident throughout the book.

42 is an enjoyable annotated scrapbook that illuminates the rich inner life and creations of Douglas Adams.

PETER DABBENE (September / October 2023)

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