This passage is excerpted from Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, which is generally about the adventures of Arthur Dent and various xenomorph friends across space and time. Here, we encounter Slartibartfast, the last of an alien race known for its prowess in making designer planets. In this portion of the book – this story-within-a-story – Slartibartfast tells Arthur about the origins of Earth.

Slartibartfast turned and regarded Arthur with his solemn old eyes. "Earthman," he said, "we are now deep in the heart of Magrathea."

"How did you know I was an Earthman?" de-
5   manded Arthur.

"These things will become clear to you," said the old man gently, "at least," he added with slight doubt in his voice, "clearer than they are at the moment."

10   He continued: "I should warn you that the chamber we are about to pass into does not literally exist within our planet. It is a little too ... large. We are about to pass through a gateway into a vast tract of hyperspace. It may disturb you."

15   Arthur made nervous noises.

Slartibartfast touched a button and added, not entirely reassuringly. "It scares the willies out of me. Hold tight."

The car shot forward straight into the circle of
20   light, and suddenly Arthur had a fairly clear idea of what infinity looked like.

It wasn't infinite in fact. Infinity itself looks flat and uninteresting. Looking up into the night sky is looking into infinity - distance is incomprehensible
25   and therefore meaningless. The chamber into which the aircar emerged was anything but infinite, it was just very, very big, so that it gave the impression of infinity far better than infinity itself.

Arthur's senses bobbed and span, as, travelling
30   at the immense speed he knew the aircar attained, they climbed slowly through the open air leaving the gateway through which they had passed an invisible pinprick in the shimmering wall behind them.

The wall.
35   The wall defied the imagination - seduced it and defeated it. The wall was so paralyzingly vast and sheer that its top, bottom and sides passed away beyond the reach of sight. The mere shock of vertigo could kill a man.

40   The wall appeared perfectly flat. It would take the finest laser measuring equipment to detect that as it climbed, apparently to infinity, as it dropped dizzily away, as it planed out to either side, it also curved. It met itself again thirteen light seconds
45   away. In other words, the wall formed the inside of a hollow sphere, a sphere over three million miles across and flooded with unimaginable light.

"Welcome,'' said Slartibartfast as the tiny speck that was the aircar, travelling now at three times the
50   speed of sound, crept imperceptibly forward into the mindboggling space, "welcome," he said, "to our factory floor."

Arthur stared around himself in a kind of wonderful horror. Ranged away before them, at distances
55   he could neither judge nor even guess at, were a series of curious suspensions, delicate traceries of metal and light hung about shadowy spherical shapes that hung in the space.

"This," said Slartibartfast, "is where we make
60   most of our planets you see."

"You mean," said Arthur, trying to form the words, "you mean you're starting it all up again now?"

"No, no, good heavens no," exclaimed the old
65   man, "no, the Galaxy isn't nearly rich enough to support us yet. No, we've been awakened to perform just one extraordinary commission for very ... special clients from another dimension. It may interest you ... there in the distance in front of us."

70   Arthur followed the old man's finger, till he was able to pick out the floating structure he was pointing out. It was indeed the only one of the many structures that betrayed any sign of activity about it, though this was more a subliminal impression than
75   anything one could put one's finger on.

At that moment, however, a flash of light arced through the structure and revealed in stark relief the patterns that were formed on the dark sphere within. Patterns that Arthur knew, rough blobby shapes that
80   were as familiar to him as the shapes of words, part of the furniture of his mind. For a few seconds he sat in stunned silence as the images rushed around his mind and tried to find somewhere to settle down and make sense. Part of his brain told him that he
85   knew perfectly well what he was looking at and what the shapes represented whilst another quite sensibly refused to countenance the idea and abdicated responsibility for any further thinking in that direction.

The flash came again, and this time there could
90   be no doubt.

"The Earth ..." whispered Arthur.

"Well, the Earth Mark Two in fact," said Slartibartfast cheerfully. "We're making a copy from our original blueprints."

95   There was a pause.

"Are you trying to tell me," said Arthur, slowly and with control, "that you originally ... made the Earth?"

"Oh yes," said Slartibartfast. "Did you ever go to a place ... I think it was called Norway?"

"No," said Arthur, "no, I didn't."

"Pity," said Slartibartfast, "that was one of mine. Won an award you know. Lovely crinkly edges. I was most upset to hear about its destruction."

"You were upset!"

"Yes. Five minutes later and it wouldn't have mattered so much. It was a quite shocking cock-up."

"Huh?" said Arthur.

"The mice were furious."

"The mice were furious?"

"Oh yes," said the old man mildly.

"Yes well so I expect were the dogs and cats and duckbilled platypuses, but..."

"Ah, but they hadn't paid for it you see, had they?"

"Look," said Arthur, "would it save you a lot of time if I just gave up and went mad now?"

For a while the aircar flew on in awkward silence. Then the old man tried patiently to explain.

"Earthman, the planet you lived on was commissioned, paid for, and run by mice. It was destroyed five minutes before the completion of the purpose for which it was built, and we've got to build another one."

Only one word registered with Arthur.

"Mice?" he said. "Indeed Earthman."

"Look, sorry - are we talking about the little white furry things with the cheese fixation and women standing on tables screaming in early sixties sit coms?"

Slartibartfast coughed politely.

"Earthman," he said, "it is sometimes hard to follow your mode of speech. Remember I have been asleep inside this planet of Magrathea for five million years and know little of these early sixties sitcoms of which you speak. These creatures you call mice, you see, they are not quite as they appear. They are merely the protrusion into our dimension of vast hyperintelligent pan-dimensional beings. The whole business with the cheese and the squeaking is just a front."

The old man paused, and with a sympathetic frown continued.

"They've been experimenting on you I'm afraid."

Arthur thought about this for a second, and then his face cleared.

"Ah no," he said, "I see the source of the misunderstanding now. No, look you see, what happened was that we used to do experiments on them. They were often used in behavioral research, Pavlov and all that sort of stuff. So what happened was that the mice would be set all sorts of tests, learning to ring bells, run around mazes and things so that the whole nature of the learning process could be examined. From our observations of their behavior, we were able to learn all sorts of things about our own ..."

Arthur's voice tailed off.

"Such subtlety ..." said Slartibartfast, "one has to admire it."

"What?" said Arthur.

"How better to disguise their real natures, and how better to guide your thinking. Suddenly running down a maze the wrong way, eating the wrong bit of cheese, unexpectedly dropping dead of myxomatosis, - if it's finely calculated the cumulative effect is enormous."

He paused for effect.

"You see, Earthman, they really are particularly clever hyperintelligent pan-dimensional beings. Your planet and people have formed the matrix of an organic computer running a ten-million-year research program ...

"Let me tell you the whole story. It'll take a little time."

"Time," said Arthur weakly, "is not currently one of my problems."

*   *   *

There are of course many problems connected with life, of which some of the most popular are Why are people born? Why do they die? Why do they want to spend so much of the intervening time wearing digital watches?

Many, many millions of years ago a race of hyperintelligent pan-dimensional beings (whose physical manifestation in their own pan-dimensional universe is not dissimilar to our own) got so fed up with the constant bickering about the meaning of life which used to interrupt their favorite pastime of Brockian Ultra Cricket (a curious game which involved suddenly hitting people for no readily apparent reason and then running away) that they decided to sit down and solve their problems once and for all.

And to this end they built themselves a stupendous supercomputer which was so amazingly intelligent that even before the data banks had been connected up it had started from "I think therefore I am" and got as far as the existence of rice pudding and income tax before anyone managed to turn it off.

It was the size of a small city.

Its main console was installed in a specially designed executive office, mounted on an enormous executive desk of finest ultra-mahogany topped with rich ultrared leather. The dark carpeting was discreetly sumptuous, exotic potted plants and tastefully engraved prints of the principal computer programmers and their families were deployed liberally about the room, and stately windows looked out upon a tree-lined public square.

On the day of the Great On-Turning two soberly dressed programmers with brief cases arrived and were shown discreetly into the office. They were aware that this day they would represent their entire race in its greatest moment, but they conducted themselves calmly and quietly as they seated themselves deferentially before the desk, opened their brief cases and took out their leather-bound notebooks.

Their names were Lunkwill and Fook.

For a few moments they sat in respectful silence, then, after exchanging a quiet glance with Fook, Lunkwill leaned forward and touched a small black panel.

The subtlest of hums indicated that the massive computer was now in total active mode. After a pause it spoke to them in a voice rich resonant and deep.

It said: "What is this great task for which I, Deep Thought, the second greatest computer in the Universe of Time and Space have been called into existence?"

Lunkwill and Fook glanced at each other in surprise.

"Your task, O Computer ..." began Fook. "No, wait a minute, this isn't right," said Lunkwill, worried. "We distinctly designed this computer to be the greatest one ever and we're not making do with second best. Deep Thought," he addressed the computer, "are you not as we designed you to be, the greatest most powerful computer in all time?"

"I described myself as the second greatest," intoned Deep Thought, "and such I am."

Another worried look passed between the two programmers. Lunkwill cleared his throat.

"There must be some mistake," he said, "are you not a greatest computer than the Milliard Gargantubrain which can count all the atoms in a star in a millisecond?"

"The Milliard Gargantubrain?" said Deep Thought with unconcealed contempt. "A mere abacus - mention it not."

"And are you not," said Fook leaning anxiously forward, "a greater analyst than the Googleplex Star Thinker in the Seventh Galaxy of Light and Ingenuity which can calculate the trajectory of every single dust particle throughout a five-week Dangrabad Beta sand-blizzard?"

"A five-week sand-blizzard?" said Deep Thought haughtily. "You ask this of me who has contemplated the very vectors of the atoms in the Big Bang itself? Molest me not with this pocket calculator stuff."

The two programmers sat in uncomfortable silence for a moment. Then Lunkwill leaned forward again.

"But are you not," he said, "a more fiendish disputant than the Great Hyperlobic Omni-Cognate Neutron Wrangler of Ciceronicus 12, the Magic and Indefatigable?"

"The Great Hyperlobic Omni-Cognate Neutron Wrangler," said Deep Thought thoroughly rolling the r's, "could talk all four legs off an Arcturan MegaDonkey - but only I could persuade it to go for a walk afterwards."

"Then what," asked Fook, "is the problem?"

"There is no problem," said Deep Thought with magnificent ringing tones. "I am simply the second greatest computer in the Universe of Space and Time."

"But the second?" insisted Lunkwill. "Why do you keep saying the second? You're surely not thinking of the Multicorticoid Perspicutron Titan Muller are you? Or the Pondermatic? Or the …?"

Contemptuous lights flashed across the computer's console.

"I spare not a single unit of thought on these cybernetic simpletons!" he boomed. "I speak of none but the computer that is to come after me!" Fook was losing patience. He pushed his notebook aside and muttered, "I think this is getting needlessly messianic."

"You know nothing of future time," pronounced Deep Thought, "and yet in my teeming circuitry I can navigate the infinite delta streams of future probability and see that there must one day come a computer whose merest operational parameters I am not worthy to calculate, but which it will be my fate eventually to design."

Fook sighed heavily and glanced across to LunkwilL

"Can we get on and ask the question?" he said. Lunkwill motioned him to wait.

"What computer is this of which you speak?" he asked.

305 "I will speak of it no further in this present time," said Deep Thought. "Now. Ask what else of me you will that I may function. Speak."

They shrugged at each other. Fook composed himself.

310 "O Deep Thought Computer," he said, "the task we have designed you to perform is this. We want you to tell us ..." he paused,"... the Answer!"

"The answer?" said Deep Thought. "The answer to what?"

315 "Life!" urged Fook.

"The Universe!" said LunkwilL

"Everything!" they said in chorus.

Deep Thought paused for a moment's reflection.

320 "Tricky," he said finally. "But can you do it?"

Again, a significant pause.

"Yes," said Deep Thought, "I can do it."

"There is an answer?" said Fook with breathless excitement."

325 "A simple answer?" added LunkwilL

"Yes," said Deep Thought. "Life, the Universe, and Everything. There is an answer. But," he added, "I'll have to think about it."

A sudden commotion destroyed the moment:
330 the door flew open and two angry men wearing the coarse faded-blue robes and belts of the Cruxwan University burst into the room, thrusting aside the ineffectual flunkies who tried to bar their way. "We demand admission!" shouted the younger of the two
335 men elbowing a pretty young secretary in the throat.

"Come on," shouted the older one, "you can't keep us out!" He pushed a junior programmer back through the door.

"We demand that you can't keep us out!"
340 bawled the younger one, though he was now firmly inside the room and no further attempts were being made to stop him.

"Who are you?" said Lunkwill, rising angrily from his seat. "What do you want?"

345 "I am Majikthise!" announced the older one.

"And I demand that I am Vroomfondel!" shouted the younger one.

Majikthise turned on Vroomfondel. "It's alright," he explained angrily, "you don't need to de-
350 mand that."

"Alright!" bawled Vroomfondel banging on an nearby desk. "I am Vroomfondel, and that is not a demand, that is a solid fact! What we demand is solid facts!"

355 "No we don't!" exclaimed Majikthise in irritation. "That is precisely what we don't demand!"

Scarcely pausing for breath, Vroomfondel shouted, "We don't demand solid facts! What we demand is a total absence of solid facts. I demand that I
360 may or may not be Vroomfondel!"

"But who the devil are you?" exclaimed an outraged Fook.

"We," said Majikthise, "are Philosophers."

"Though we may not be," said Vroomfondel
365 waving a warning finger at the programmers.

"Yes we are," insisted Majikthise. "We are quite definitely here as representatives of the Amalgamated Union of Philosophers, Sages, Luminaries and Other Thinking Persons, and we want this machine
370 off, and we want it off now!"

"What's the problem?" said LunkwilL

"I'll tell you what the problem is mate," said Majikthise, "demarcation, that's the problem!"

"We demand," yelled Vroomfondel, "that de-
375 marcation may or may not be the problem!"

"You just let the machines get on with the adding up," warned Majikthise, "and we'll take care of the eternal verities thank you very much. You want to check your legal position you do mate. Under law
380 the Quest for Ultimate Truth is quite clearly the inalienable prerogative of your working thinkers. Any bloody machine goes and actually finds it and we're straight out of a job aren't we? I mean what's the use of our sitting up half the night arguing that there may
385 or may not be a God if this machine only goes and gives us his bleeding phone number the next morning?"

"That's right!" shouted Vroomfondel, "we demand rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncer-
390 tainty!"

Suddenly a stentorian voice boomed across the room. "Might I make an observation at this point?" inquired Deep Thought.

"We'll go on strike!" yelled Vroomfondel.

395 "That's right!" agreed Majikthise. "You'll have a national Philosopher's strike on your hands!"

The hum level in the room suddenly increased as several ancillary bass driver units, mounted in sedately carved and varnished cabinet speakers around
400 the room, cut in to give Deep Thought's voice a little more power.

"All I wanted to say," bellowed the computer, "is that my circuits are now irrevocably committed to calculating the answer to the Ultimate Question of
405 Life, the Universe, and Everything he paused and satisfied himself that he now had everyone's attention, before continuing more quietly, "but the programme will take me a little while to run."

Fook glanced impatiently at his watch.

410   "How long?" he said.

"Seven and a half million years," said Deep Thought.

Lunkwill and Fook blinked at each other.

"Seven and a half million years ...!" they cried
415 in chorus.

"Yes," declaimed Deep Thought, "I said I'd have to think about it, didn't I? And it occurs to me that running a programme like this is bound to create an enormous amount of popular publicity for the whole
420 area of philosophy in general. Everyone's going to have their own theories about what answer I'm eventually to come up with, and who better to capitalize on that media market than you yourself? So long as you can keep disagreeing with each other vio-
425 lently enough and slagging each other off in the popular press, you can keep yourself on the gravy train for life. How does that sound?"

The two philosophers gaped at him.

"Bloody hell," said Majikthise, "now that is
430 what I call thinking. Here Vroomfondel, why do we never think of things like that?"

"Dunno," said Vroomfondel in an awed whisper, "think our brains must be too highly trained Majikthise."
435   So saying, they turned on their heels and walked out of the door and into a lifestyle beyond their wildest dreams.

                    *   *   *

"Yes, very salutary," said Arthur, after Slarti-bartfast had related the salient points of the story to
440 him, "but I don't understand what all this has got to do with the Earth and mice and things."

"That is but the first half of the story Earth-man," said the old man. "If you would care to dis-cover what happened seven and a half million years
445 later, on the great day of the Answer, allow me to in-vite you to my study where you can experience the events yourself on our Sens-O-Tape records. That is unless you would care to take a quick stroll on the surface of New Earth. It's only half completed I'm
450 afraid - we haven't even finished burying the artificial dinosaur skeletons in the crust yet, then we have the Tertiary and Quarternary Periods of the Cenozoic Era to lay down, and ..."

"No thank you," said Arthur, "it wouldn't be
455 quite the same."

"No," said Slartibartfast, "it won't be," and he turned the aircar round and headed back towards the mind-numbing wall.

                    *   *   *

Slartibartfast's study was a total mess, like the
460 results of an explosion in a public library. The old man frowned as they stepped in.

"Terribly unfortunate," he said, "a diode blew in one of the life-support computers. When we tried to revive our cleaning staff we discovered they'd
465 been dead for nearly thirty thousand years. Who's going to clear away the bodies, that's what I want to know. Look why don't you sit yourself down over there and let me plug you in?"

He gestured Arthur towards a chair which
470 looked as if it had been made out of the rib cage of a stegosaurus.

"It was made out of the rib cage of a stego-saurus," explained the old man as he pottered about fishing bits of wire out from under tottering piles of
475 paper and drawing instruments. "Here," he said, "hold these," and passed a couple of stripped wire ends to Arthur.

The instant he took hold of them a bird flew straight through him.
480   He was suspended in mid-air and totally invisi-ble to himself. Beneath him was a pretty tree-lined city square, and all around it as far as the eye could see were white concrete buildings of airy spacious design but somewhat the worse for wear - many
485 were cracked and stained with rain. Today however the sun was shining, a fresh breeze danced lightly through the trees, and the odd sensation that all the buildings were quietly humming was probably caused by the fact that the square and all the streets
490 around it were thronged with cheerful excited peo-ple. Somewhere a band was playing, brightly colored flags were fluttering in the breeze and the spirit of carnival was in the air.

Arthur felt extraordinarily lonely stuck up in
495 the air above it all without so much as a body to his name, but before he had time to reflect on this a voice rang out across the square and called for every-one's attention.

A man standing on a brightly dressed dais be-
500 fore the building which clearly dominated the square was addressing the crowd over a Tannoy.

"O people waiting in the Shadow of Deep Thought!" he cried out. "Honored Descendants of Vroomfondel and Majikthise, the Greatest and Most
505 Truly Interesting Pundits the Universe has ever known ... The Time of Waiting is over!"

Wild cheers broke out amongst the crowd. Flags, streamers, and wolf whistles sailed through the air. The narrower streets looked rather like

510 centipedes rolled over on their backs and frantically waving their legs in the air.

"Seven and a half million years our race has waited for this Great and Hopefully Enlightening Day!" cried the cheer leader. "The Day of the An-
515 swer!"

Hurrahs burst from the ecstatic crowd.

"Never again," cried the man, "never again will we wake up in the morning and think Who am I? What is my purpose in life? Does it really, cosmically
520 speaking, matter if I don't get up and go to work? For today we will finally learn once and for all the plain and simple answer to all these nagging little problems of Life, the Universe and Everything!"

As the crowd erupted once again, Arthur found
525 himself gliding through the air and down towards one of the large stately windows on the first floor of the building behind the dais from which the speaker was addressing the crowd.

He experienced a moment's panic as he sailed
530 straight through towards the window, which passed when a second or so later he found he had gone right through the solid glass without apparently touching it.

No one in the room remarked on his peculiar
535 arrival, which is hardly surprising as he wasn't there. He began to realize that the whole experience was merely a recorded projection which knocked six-track seventy-millimeter into a cocked hat.

The room was much as Slartibartfast had de-
540 scribed it. In seven and a half million years it had been well looked after and regularly cleaned every century or so. The ultra-mahogany desk was worn at the edges, the carpet a little faded now, but the large computer terminal sat in sparkling glory on the
545 desk's leather top, as bright as if it had been constructed yesterday. Two severely dressed men sat respectfully before the terminal and waited.

"The time is nearly upon us," said one, and Arthur was surprised to see a word suddenly material-
550 ize in thin air just by the man's neck. The word was Loonquawl, and it flashed a couple of times and the disappeared again. Before Arthur was able to assimilate this the other man spoke and the word Phouchg appeared by his neck.
555 "Seventy-five thousand generations ago, our ancestors set this program in motion," the second man said, "and in all that time we will be the first to hear the computer speak."

"An awesome prospect, Phouchg," agreed the
560 first man, and Arthur suddenly realized that he was watching a recording with subtitles.

"We are the ones who will hear," said Phouchg, "the answer to the great question of Life ...!"

"The Universe ...!" said LoonquawL
565 "And Everything ...!"

"Shhh," said Loonquawl with a slight gesture, "I think Deep Thought is preparing to speak!"

There was a moment's expectant pause whilst panels slowly came to life on the front of the con-
570 sole. Lights flashed on and off experimentally and settled down into a businesslike pattern. A soft low hum came from the communication channel.

"Good morning," said Deep Thought at last.

"Er ... Good morning, O Deep Thought," said
575 Loonquawl nervously, "do you have ... er, that is ..."

"An answer for you?" interrupted Deep Thought majestically. "Yes. I have."

The two men shivered with expectancy. Their waiting had not been in vain.
580 "There really is one?" breathed Phouchg.

"There really is one," confirmed Deep Thought.

"To Everything? To the great Question of Life, the Universe and Everything?"

"Yes."
585 Both of the men had been trained for this moment, their lives had been a preparation for it, they had been selected at birth as those who would witness the answer, but even so they found themselves gasping and squirming like excited children.
590 "And you're ready to give it to us?" urged LoonquawL "I am." "Now?"

"Now," said Deep Thought.

They both licked their dry lips.

"Though I don't think," added Deep Thought,
595 "that you're going to like it."

"Doesn't matter!" said Phouchg. "We must know it! Now!" "Now?" inquired Deep Thought.

"Yes! Now ..."

"Alright," said the computer and settled into si-
600 lence again. The two men fidgeted. The tension was unbearable.

"You're really not going to like it," observed Deep Thought. "Tell us!"

"Alright," said Deep Thought. "The Answer to
605 the Great Question ..."

"Yes ...!"

"Of Life, the Universe and Everything ..." said Deep Thought.

"Yes ...!"
610 "Is ..." said Deep Thought, and paused.

"Yes ...!?"

"Is ..."

"Yes…!!...?”

"Forty-two," said Deep Thought, with infinite
615 majesty and calm.

                    *   *   *

     It was a long time before anyone spoke.
     Out of the corner of his eye Phouchg could see
the sea of tense expectant faces down in the square
outside.
620   "We're going to get lynched aren't we?" he
whispered.
     "It was a tough assignment," said Deep
Thought mildly.
     "Forty-two!" yelled Loonquawl. "Is that all
625 you've got to show for seven and a half million years'
work?" "I checked it very thoroughly," said the com-
puter, "and that quite definitely is the answer. I think
the problem, to be quite honest with you, is that
you've never actually known what the question is."
630   "But it was the Great Question! The Ultimate
Question of Life, the Universe and Everything!"
howled Loonquawl.
     "Yes," said Deep Thought with the air of one
who suffers fools gladly, "but what actually is it?"
635   A slow stupefied silence crept over the men as
they stared at the computer and then at each other.
     "Well, you know, it's just Everything ... Every-
thing ..." offered Phouchg weakly.
     "Exactly!" said Deep Thought. "So once you do
640 know what the question actually is, you'll know what
the answer means."
     "Oh terrific," muttered Phouchg flinging aside
his notebook and wiping away a tiny tear.
     "Look, alright, alright," said Loonquawl, "can
645 you just please tell us the Question?"
     "The Ultimate Question?"
     "Yes!"
     "Of Life, the Universe, and Everything?"
     "Yes!"
650   Deep Thought pondered this for a moment.
     "Tricky," he said.
     "But can you do it?" cried Loonquawl.
     Deep Thought pondered this for another long
moment. Finally: "No," he said firmly.
655   Both men collapsed on to their chairs in des-
pair.
     "But I'll tell you who can," said Deep Thought.
     They both looked up sharply.
     "Who?" "Tell us!"
660   Suddenly Arthur began to feel his apparently
non-existent scalp begin to crawl as he found himself
moving slowly but inexorably forward towards the
console, but it was only a dramatic zoom on the part
of whoever had made the recording he assumed.
665   "I speak of none other than the computer that
is to come after me," intoned Deep Thought, his
voice regaining its accustomed declamatory tones. "A
computer whose merest operational parameters I am
not worthy to calculate - and yet I will design it for
670 you. A computer which can calculate the Question to
the Ultimate Answer, a computer of such infinite and
subtle complexity that organic life itself shall form
part of its operational matrix. And you yourselves
shall take on new forms and go down into the com-
675 puter to navigate its ten-million-year program! Yes! I
shall design this computer for you. And I shall name
it also unto you. And it shall be called ... The Earth."
     Phouchg gaped at Deep Thought.
     "What a dull name," he said and great incisions
680 appeared down the length of his body. Loonquawl,
too, suddenly sustained horrific gashes from no-
where. The Computer console blotched and cracked,
the walls flickered and crumbled and the room
crashed upwards into its own ceiling ...
685   Slartibartfast was standing in front of Arthur
holding the two wires. "End of the tape," he ex-
plained.

1. As used in line 36, the word "paralyzingly" most nearly means

A. stunningly
B. surprisingly
C. rigidly
D. surpassingly

2. Who commissioned the creation of Earth

A. Slartibartfast
B. Magrathea
C. Mice
D. Dogs

3. The section of the passage from lines 144 to 170 is an example of what literary device?

A. irony
B. foreshadowing
C. exposition
D. allusion

4. Deep Thought self-identified as what

A. The Greatest Computer in All of Space and Time
B. The Most Computationally Powerful Computer Ever Devised
C. The Seeker of the Question to Life, the Universe, and Everything
D. The Second Greatest Computer in the Universe of Time and Space

5. Who storms in on the first meeting with Deep Thought

A. Philosophers
B. Theologians
C. Mathematicians
D. Computer Technicians

6. As used in line 391, the word "stentorian" most nearly means

A. reticent
B. agitated
C. piqued
D. thunderous

7. As used in line 473, the word "pottered" most nearly means

A. rushed
B. slinked
C. galivanted
D. idled

8. what is the great problem with the question of life, the universe, and everything?

A. there is no answer
B. the question is not known
C. the answer is too simple
D. the answer is not known

9. what is unique about the computer designed by Deep Thought

A. It will incorporate organic components
B. It will be woven into the fabric of space-time
C. It will operate using super-luminal processors
D. It will exist outside of time and space.

10. According to this story, what is Earth?

A. A commissioned work of art
B. A commissioned planet for inhabitation by mice
C. A commissioned super-computer
D. A commissioned lab experiment