

THE HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

Milliway's: The Restaurant of the End of the Universe
A Theatrical Dining Experience

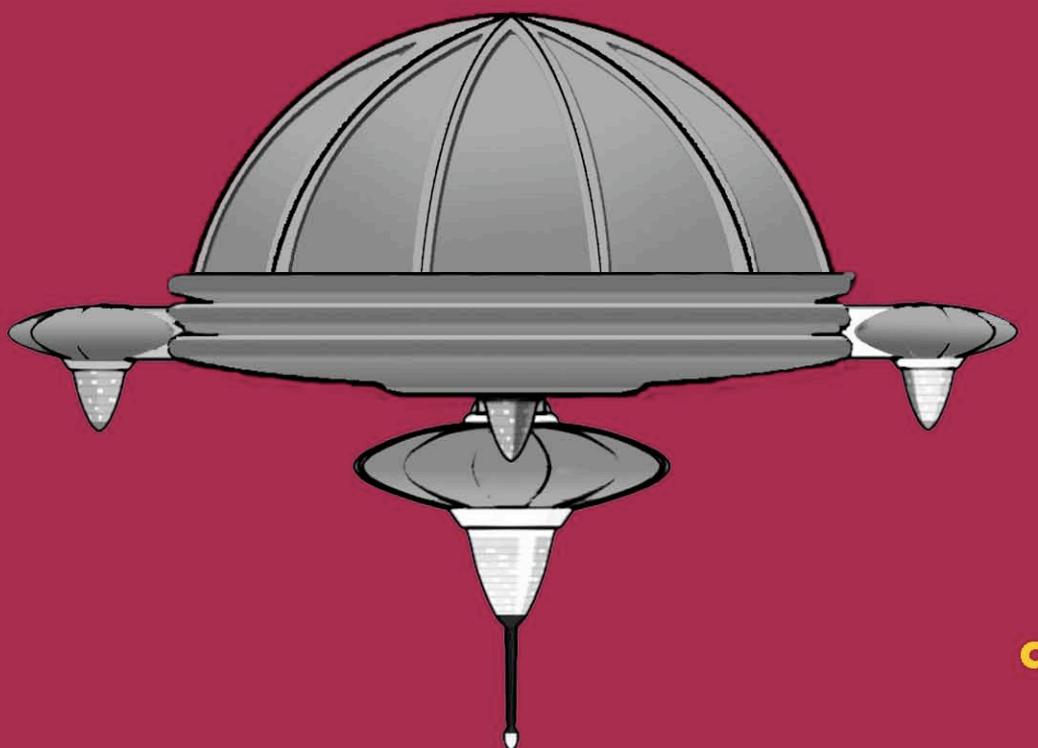
Love and kisses
Zaphod
X

DON'T PANIC

"Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "The Universe as we know it has now been in existence for over one hundred and seventy thousand million billion years and will be ending in a little over half an hour. So, welcome one and all to Milliway's, the Restaurant at the End of the Universe!"

Douglas Adams

The Restaurant at the End of the Universe



Milliway's is perhaps the most extravagant creation in the Universe. Situated in a time-bubble off of the largest spiral arm of the second largest galaxy, it promises a fantastic view of the cataclysmic destruction of our universe... in absolute safety and with one of the three best bars in the known Universe.

Milliway's offers a fantastic five-course meal rich enough to satiate all seven of the forked-tongues of a critic from the Diamond Nebula. Milliway's is also the first (and the last) restaurant to be built entirely under a force dome in order to allow diners an unobstructed 360-degree view of the night sky. Patrons have the ability to watch their own home system, and all their credit card debt, be neatly vaporized over the course of the nightly show.

You never know whom you will meet at Milliway's. The political and cultural elite from over forty star systems regularly come here to dine and to exchange stories over a Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster. The owners of Milliway's promise that your meal will be unlike anything that you have ever experienced, or that you will ever experience again.

THE GUIDE

MILLIWAY'S

EARTH ENTRANCE



No one now alive is wealthy enough to afford a meal at Milliway's. Not even the Galactic President could pilfer enough from the pockets of his constituents to pay for a table. Ever thoughtful of its customers, Milliway's has sent robotic representatives back in time to encourage future patrons to begin saving now, well over 70 billion years before the restaurant is to begin construction.

Don't worry sir, we'll page you when your table is ready.

Meet Jacques. Milliway's has sent him here to Disney World to manage reservations from this quadrant of our galaxy. He's set up shop in Tomorrow Land, mostly because of the irony. He'll take your reservations and handle all of the usual preparations for an inter-galactic jump. There is nothing serious you have to worry about. His main task is making sure that nothing awkward happens during time travel, such as meeting your future self. Jacques will help you to set up your section C Bank account, which will assure that you continue to receive the proper interest rate long after the Earth has been vaporized. Feel free to talk with him about the future. With a brain the size of a planet, and his Genuine People Personality (GPP), he often gets bored.

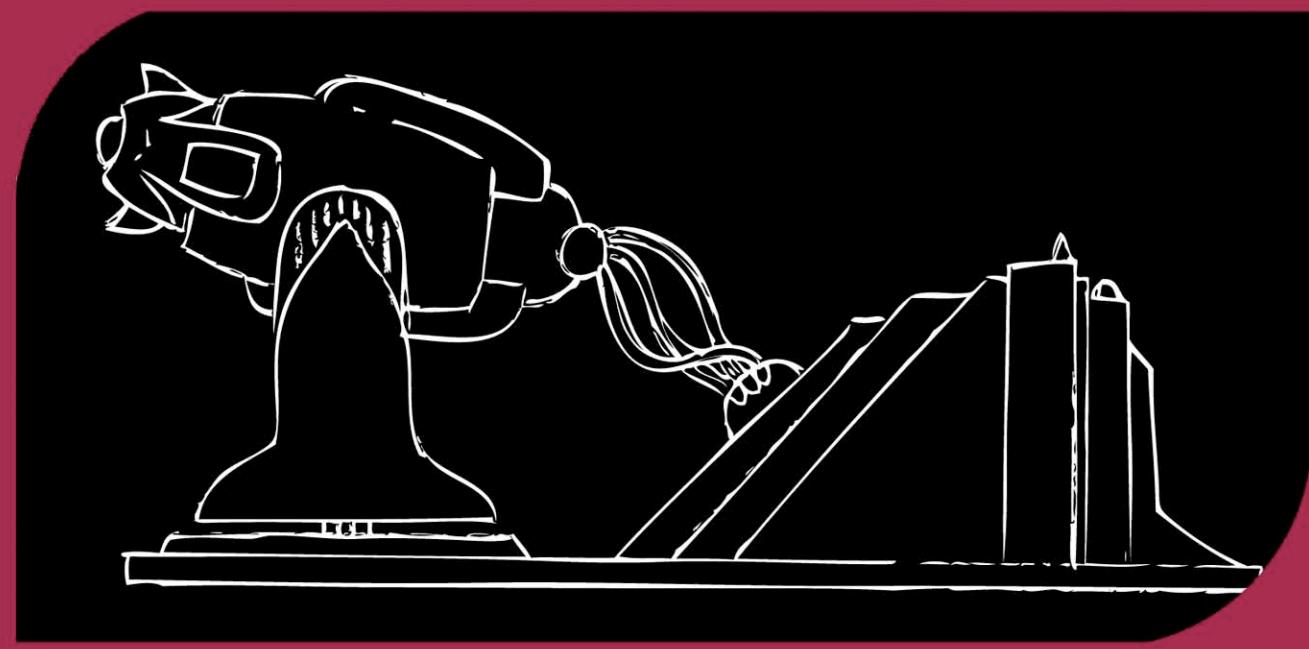


Jacques is an animatronic pupeted character, much like the ETC's own Quasi, or Disney's Crush from *Turtle Talk*, with a human actor performing the role of Jacques from off stage. Jacques sits atop a kiosk that is linked into Disney World's existing reservation system, allowing him to coordinate with hotels and other means of guest management. He can display emotions and carry on believable interactions with guests, entertaining anyone who should walk by his platform. His kiosk would be a permanent performance space affixed to the walk of Tomorrow Land.

As a guest of Milliway's, you fly through time and space, whizzing past the millennia and miles in a matter of seconds. You could really use a drink.

The teleporter is modeled after the elevator in Disney's Haunted Mansion. From the outside, it would appear that the guests have entered a small pod, and through a series of electrical discharges and lights, have been transformed into energy and shot into the sky via satellite dish. Inside, the members of the party would witness themselves shrinking and being shot out into the universe. This effect would be preformed by means of lighting, and walls that are actually display screens. These screens would show the wall's texture first scaling, then being transformed into a view of the sky. The view would then progress through space towards Milliway's, and onto a receiving satellite dish. The walls of the room would then reverse the scaling effect and proceed to open. Optionally, the pod could be positioned on a motion platform, but this might be a poor idea where dining is involved.

In reality, the entirety of the Milliway's restaurant complex is located below the teleporter plaza. The central dining area measures 70 feet in radius, and this is estimated to seat 512 guests and cast members. The kitchen and support areas for the restaurant are located beneath the dining area. The arrival and departure rooms are located in a smaller room off of the side of the main dining area, as are the bathrooms and the show control rooms.



You materialize in the impeccably decorated anteroom of Milliway's. Looking around, you notice that today's menu has been set to 'humanoid'. You are greeted by another robot in the same model line as Jacques and led towards the coat check. The coat check is 'manned' by none other than Marvin the Paranoid Android. He tells you to enjoy your meal. Just as Marvin begins explaining that he is very depressed, your waiter arrives to greet you. The waiter is not human, but seems nice enough. You follow him to your table

The purpose of the Jacques-model animatronic pupeted robot is to re-orient the guests to their surroundings after stepping out of the teleportation capsule, and to provide them with a guide to meeting the wait staff. The actual wait staff will be costumed actors, and each table of guests will have a waiter assigned to them ahead of time who will act as their "keeper" for the entirety of the experience.



Marvin the Paranoid Android will be an actor in costume. He will be responsible for guest's coats and any bags they would like to check. The full costume will allow for quick switching of performers without reliance on physical traits. Voice modulation will be used to approximate Marvin's voice as it was heard in the film.

You enter the great dining hall and are instantly struck by its glamour and extravagance. The entire room is decorated in shining gold and rich white plastic. The art style is inspired by Earth's 20th century Art Deco period. The ceiling is decorated in a metal inlay showing classical interpretations of the constellations.

The main room is circular, with seats organized in a radial pattern around a central podium. On top of the podium is a statue of the mythical Pordwanda, who legend tells us was enslaved to forever hold the universe on his back. Tonight Pordwanda shrugs.



The architecture of the dining room is inspired mostly from classic Art Deco. The model of the universe that Pordwanda is supporting actually conceals an IMAX and planetarium projection array that will be used throughout the experience. The gilded walls of the restaurant are actually designed and built in distinct "flower petal" sections. They are situated in a framework of tracks, allowing them to slide into the floor of the seating area, and expose a planetarium projection dome behind them.



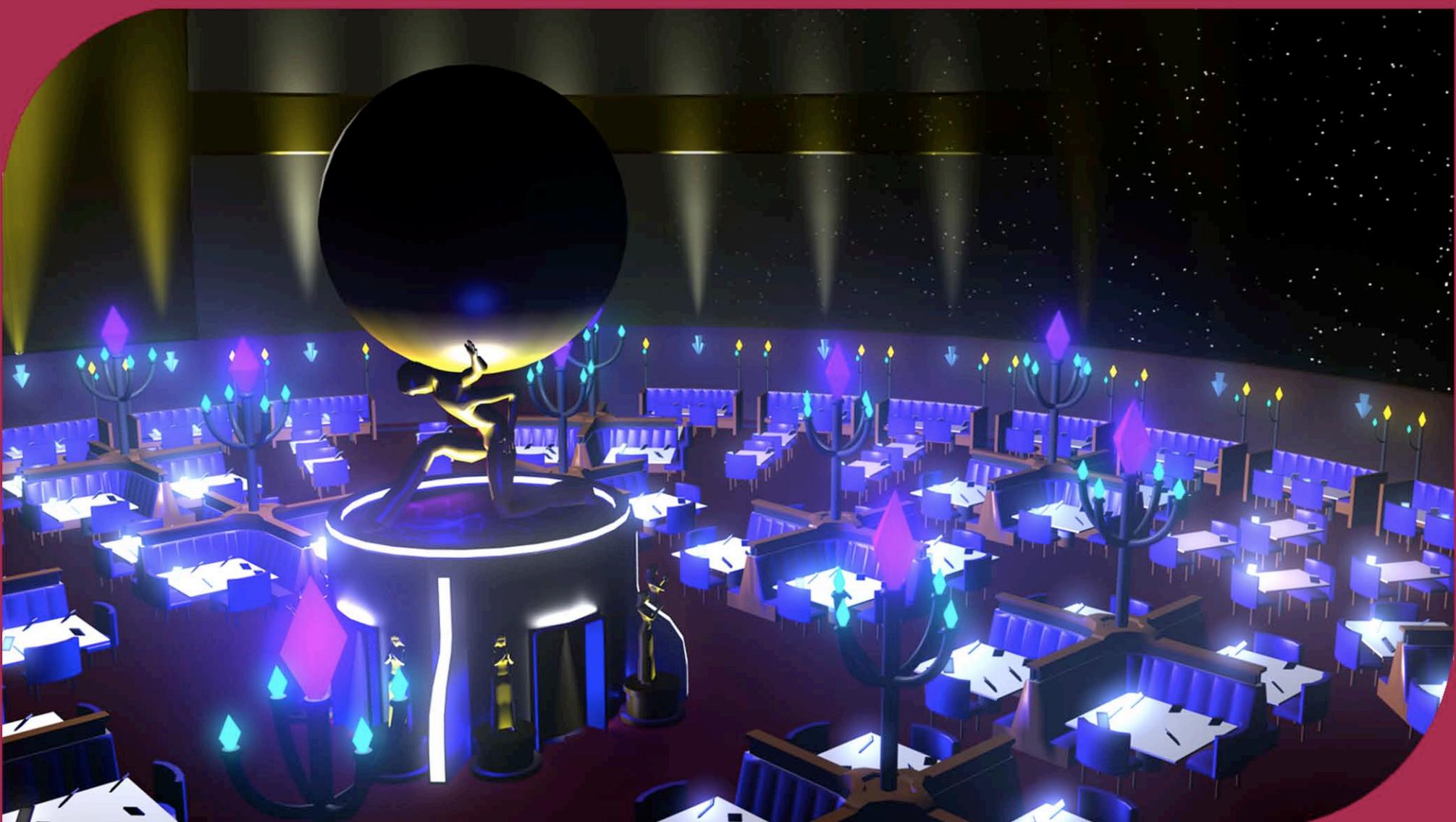
When you sit down at your table, you see copies of a peculiar book waiting at each seat. It's the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy! The guide glows and talks to you, welcoming you to Milliway's and suggesting that you order your meal before the station moves away from the dock. You follow the guide's suggestions and descriptions and pick out a delicious meal. You notice that the guide also has some other functions, such as information retrieval, the ability to summon your waiter to the table, and an opportunity to play games with the rest of your party and the entire restaurant.

Every diner's seat will have a small touch screen --The Guide-- built into the table before it. The guide will run off a local computer, and connect to a central management network. The menu system will run from this machine, along with a few interactive trivia and casual games for patrons to play.



A short time after you take your seat, your first drink of the night arrives: a malted beverage from Alpha Centauri called 'The Astro Blast'. The captain's voice comes over the ship's intercom system. He greets you to Milliway's, and asks that all patrons and staff take their seats as he prepares to move the station to the best possible viewing location. After a quick cross-check, the captain notes that all the station's systems are green, and that he will now open the viewing dome. First, an electric field appears around the restaurant's perimeter for safety. Then, amidst the swelling of the music, the gilded ceiling begins to descend into the floor. You are temporarily blinded by the starlight that filters through the first cracks, but slowly your eyes adjust to the beautiful nebula you find outside. The restaurant slowly travels out into deeper space as you watch the stars slide past you.

The captain's voice, along with most of the story elements to follow, will be pre-recorded assets, queued and then initiated by a cast member in the dining area. As the internal dome ceiling opens, the planetarium projector atop the statue begins to project, in time with the decent of the dome walls, to create a seamless illusion. The dining area is situated above a large shaker amplifier that will create the illusion of space flight's vibration. The combination of a digital planetarium projection and that of a wide-angle video projector, such as IMAX, will create a unique visual experience.



As you watch the sky, your appetizer course arrives. It's delicious. While you eat, you watch the celebrities walking from table to table, conversing with the other guests. You even notice guests from Earth's own past, such as Beethoven and Cleopatra. At the waiter's suggestion, you might wave Beethoven over to your table, and after introductions, ask him to hum a few bars of his Moonlight Sonata, feeling it would be appropriate for this special evening.



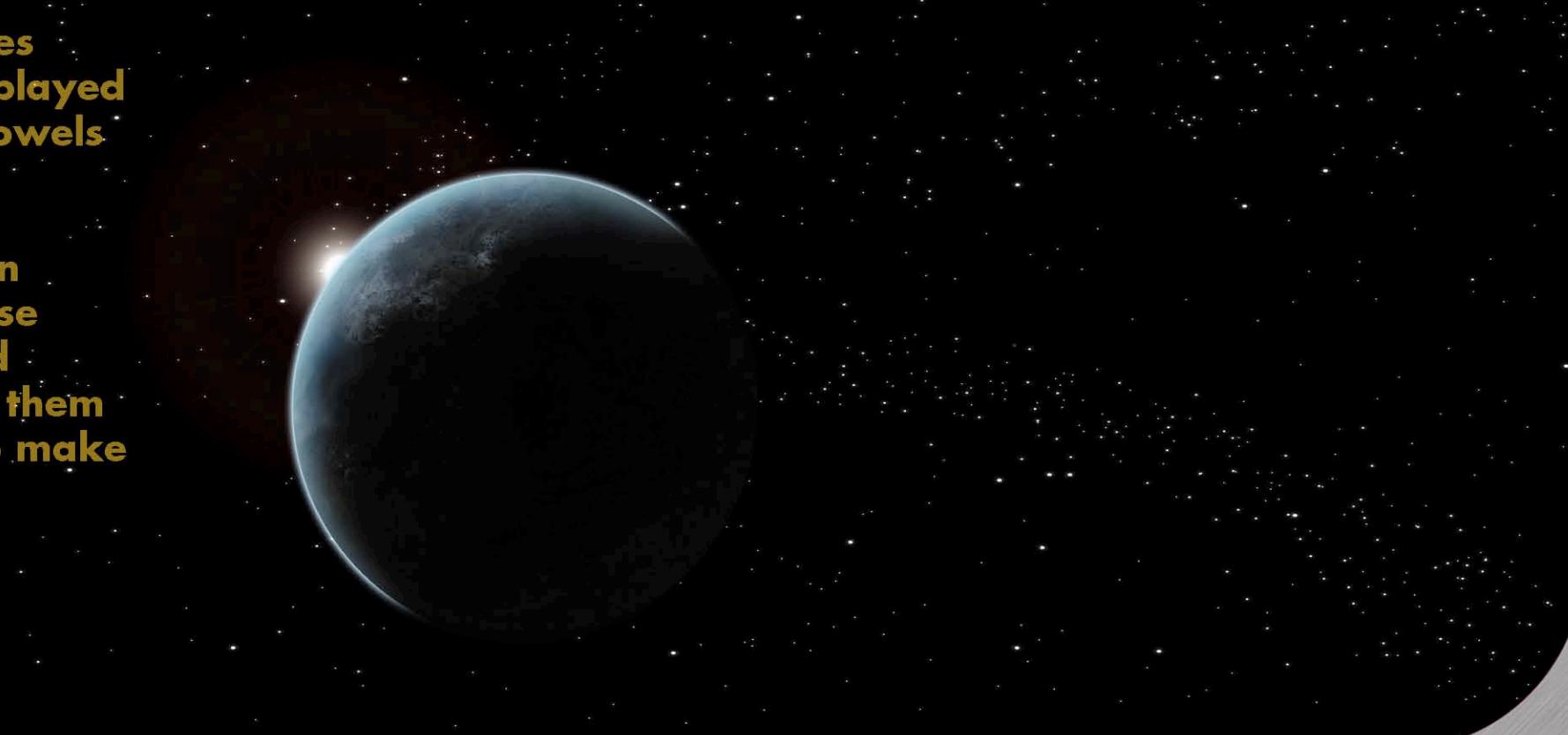
As your salad and soup arrive, the captain begins to point out disturbances in the sky. Smaller galaxies and planets are starting to implode, or to get sucked into black holes. The captain suggests that you use The Guide to locate planets that are likely to meet their demise sooner than others. He offers a prize to the first patron who can successfully find 5 systems in a row that will have expired. You eagerly watch the sky for any sign of disaster.

You are watching an exploding supernova when an old man approaches you. He looks oddly familiar, and is dressed in similar clothing to yourself. He pulls up a chair, and stares. You ask the man who he is, and to your surprise, he answers that he is you from 30 years in the future! Not believing him, you question him on the names of your family and about your occupation. He eerily knows it all! Anything can happen as reality slowly tears itself apart.

After the old man leaves, you go back to your game. The game ends when a guest at another table gets five in a row, and is awarded a towel. The Captain gets back on the PA system and informs you that Earth's sun has now been transformed into a black hole. "Your planet will be crushed into nothingness in about three minutes, but don't worry! All life on your planet was destroyed when the sun went supernova a few millennia ago. Ah! Your main courses are ready!"

The touch screens can be used for many networked games between the guests. The game described here would be played as modification of classic bingo. Fitting with the theme, Towels would make excellent prizes.

The information gleaned from the 'banking' form back on Earth is passed on to actors who have the ability to choose guests that they can best impersonate in appearance and personality. Waiters throughout the night will be feeding them information (such as the names of those in your party) to make a better illusion.



Your main course arrives, and you begin to devour your meal as if you were the ravenous bug-blatter beast from Trool. A few minutes into the meal, a strange noise start to be heard. The lights dim. The room shakes. You hear someone scream. You can hear rumors of 'his' return from those around you.

When you look around, you detect a faint hint of fear in your fellow diners' eyes, but the waiters mostly seem annoyed. Suddenly, in a flash of light, a man in a white robe appears on top of the central statue!

"I have returned!" says the man forcefully. "I am the prophet Zarquon! I once foretold the end of the universe, and now I am here to announce its coming!"

"Oh pipe down" says The Captain over the PA system. The lights turn back on and the waiters go back to their duties.

The captain continues "Look Zarquon: Every time we do this trip, you show up. We know the Universe is about to end. That's why we are out here. It's a great show!"

"I know", says Zarquon, "I'm just here for a drink."

He climbs down from the podium and joins a table at the other end of the restaurant.



You finish your main course, and look back up at the universe. Things are starting to get bad. Not only are black holes forming left and right, and planets imploding under their own weight, but it seems that some of the laws of physics are beginning to break down. You notice that gravity seems to have failed and for some reason, the nearest system looks more like a pool table than a heavenly body. The universe is in bad shape.

The Captain announces "Dessert is ready, and the universe will cease to exist in about 5 minutes... so eat fast."

As you drink your replicated tea-like substance and eat your ice cream, you follow the implosion of an entire solar system, noting it looks very much like a firework going off in reverse. The once subtle sounds of the death throes of existence have now risen to a rather annoying rumble. You call over a waiter and ask if there is something that can be done. He leaves to ask the captain, and in a minute, an announcement is made.

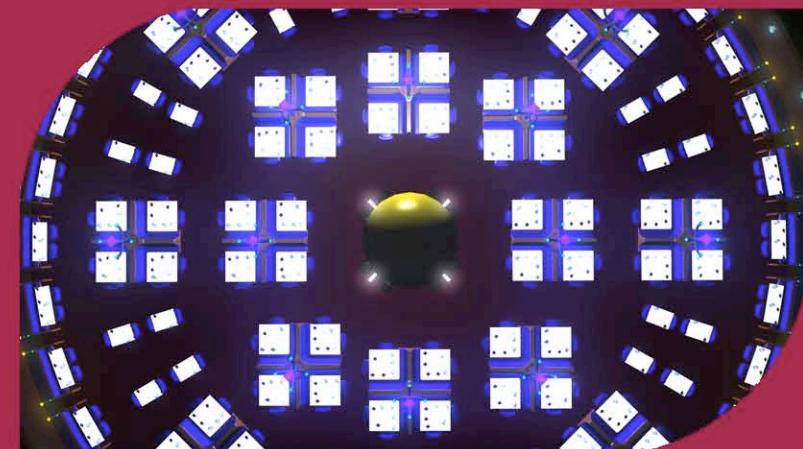
"Some of our guests are finding that the destruction of Everything is distracting them from their desert conversation. We shall be shutting the audio ports."

You breathe a sigh of relief as some relaxing elevator music begins to play... in ironic contrast to the absolute chaos of what is going on outside of Milliway's.

Dessert is finished, and now you are fascinated by the display out the windows. You watch the entirety of existence converge slowly into a single point. As everything you have ever known is sucked away, the gilded domes of the restaurant's roof come back up to seal off the remaining bleak nothingness. The last piece of matter disappears -- you hold your breath -- the restaurant goes black for a second -- and then the lights turn back on. All of the patrons sit aghast, afraid to move, lest they shatter this bubble that has spared them the fate of the rest of the Universe.

Then you hear an unfamiliar voice.

"Thank you for dining at Milliways. Now that existence has ended, please take your belongings and return with your party to the teleportation rooms. Before returning to your time of origin, please don't hesitate to stop at our gift shops. Please exit quickly, because we need to prepare the area for our next guests, the Vogons. They can't stand the smell of Humans"



As you get up to leave, you see a strange thing; A worker appears to rewind time. He walks up to the statue of Pordwanda in the center of the room and pulls a gold remote control from the statue's hand. Pointing it at the sky, the dome re-opens a small amount, and rewind symbols appear on in the sky as galaxies reform and planets pop back into existence. You always wondered if it would hurt to time travel, but it appears its far less painful than setting a clock on a VCR.

You make a point of stopping at the gift shop, because you have to have the recipe for the Pan-Galactic Gargle Blaster... and a towel. You can't believe that you left home without it.

After retrieving your coats from a still paranoid and depressed Marvin, you climb back into the teleportation pods with the rest of your party, and are beamed back to Walt Disney World. You walk out to find Jacques still on duty at his kiosk as if nothing has happened. As if nothing has happened at all.



DON'T PANIC



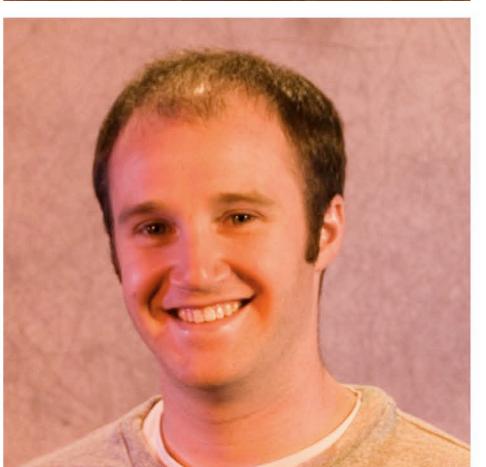
**Brendan
Macdonald**



**Rich
Marmura**



**Andrew
Moore**



**Evan
Tahler**



We four gentlemen are graduate students at the Entertainment Technology Center (ETC) at Carnegie Mellon University. The ETC is an interdisciplinary program, granting a Masters of Entertainment Technology to its graduates. This program combines students from all disciplines and teaches the fundamentals of entertainment design from a holistic, project-based point of view. In our small team of four students, we have eclectic backgrounds varying from mechanical engineering to set and lighting design.

Currently, we are all working on the "Location Based Entertainment" project. This project operates on a studio model, working for 6 distinct clients, filing their needs for concept design, technological assets, and thematic work. All of us are working to earn our way into the field of themed entertainment, both in our schooling and in our personal time.

Please contact our point person with any questions:

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