



Coming Soon!!!

By John Barth

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In a novelistic romp that is by turns hilarious and brilliant, John Barth, the dean of postmodern fiction, spoofs his own place in the pantheon of contemporary fiction and the generation of writers who have followed in the wake of his literary trailblazing.

Barth's first novel in ten years, *COMING SOON!!!* is the tale of two writers: an older, retiring novelist setting out to write his last work and a young, aspiring writer of hypertext intent on toppling his master. Inspired by a gently sinking showboat replica called *The Original Floating Opera II*, grounded on a shoal somewhere in Chesapeake Bay as a hurricane (and Y2K) approaches, they race each other to write a novel about a floating opera -- a reprise of the fictional mentor's first novel, of Barth's own first novel, of Edna Ferber's literary monument *Show Boat* and its spawn of musicals and films. In the heat of their rivalry, the writers navigate, and sometimes stumble over, the cultural fault lines between print and electronic fiction, mentor and mentee, postmodernism and modernism.

At a time of intense renewed interest in postmodernism, *COMING SOON!!!* spotlights its legacy with the wit and irreverence that mark Barth as one of our most highly regarded writers. It is an extraordinary addition to, and a playful riff on, Barth's oeuvre, a series of books that have shaped contemporary literature.

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Coming Soon!!! By John Barth Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Technical ingenuity is a hallmark of Barth's work, and his latest novel relies almost entirely upon it. A M'bius strip of a narrative, the novel begins with the discovery by Ditsy, a transgendered boat captain, of a computer disk containing a novel, *Coming Soon!!*, by Johns "Hop" Johnson, an aspiring novelist whose specific aspiration is to use this novel, with its hypertextual accoutrements, to get into the Johns Hopkins creative writing program. Hop's novel concerns a Novelist Emeritus, John Barth, who is retiring from Johns Hopkins and writing a last "narrative," *Coming Soon*, which involves both a writing student named Hop Johnson and Ditsy's discovery of the *Coming Soon* floating computer disk. In both narratives, Hop is a member of the Arkangel Players on a showboat plying the Chesapeake Bay under the moniker *The Original Floating Opera II*, referring to Barth's first novel. Furthermore, the crew/cast is investigating the origin of Edna Ferber's *Showboat*, which was inspired by an earlier Chesapeake showboat, the James Adams Floating Theater. Unfortunately, the display of metafictional conceits that subtends the novel does not make up for clunky writing and uninspired characters. Hop Johnson, the Novelist Aspirant, seems to write, think and talk just like the Novelist Emeritus, which subtracts from the internecine authorial quarrel that is this novel's main interest. There is much gap filling (for example, we are given condensed reports of the news, from 1995 to 1999), and for large stretches the enterprise is seemingly propelled mainly by the need to fill pages with words. Readers are advised to turn to the original *Floating Opera* and leave this massy addendum to Barth's academic acolytes.

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From Library Journal

"This tale of novelists Aspirant and 'Emeritus,' of *Unoriginal Floating Operas*, and of the possible *End et cetera*" marks the return after ten years of one of the grand old men of postmodern fiction a status that, charmingly, he does not seem to take too seriously. Indeed, one of the central functions of the novel is to spoof his own career and the experimental writers who have followed in his wake. The two central characters are an older novelist just retired from an academic career who is setting out to write his last novel but is suffering a bit from writer's block and a young M.F.A. student who believes that the future lies in electronic fiction that allows the reader to decide how the story should proceed by choosing from a variety of scenarios. The latter also happens to work on a showboat on the Chesapeake, *The Original Floating Opera II*, which becomes in a reprise of the fictional mentor's first novel, Barth's own first novel, and the Edna Ferber classic *Show Boat* the focus of their independent yet intertwined efforts to create a novel for the new millennium. In the end, however, it is not the story that matters but the perspective on the nature of the literary profession in this modern age and on the career of one of its most eminent members. Unfortunately, despite its charm, wit, and erudition, it is not likely to attract a mass audience. Highly recommended for collections of serious fiction in both public and academic libraries.

- David W. Henderson, *Eckerd Coll. Lib., St. Petersburg, FL*

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From [Booklist](#)

As the curtain rises on the latest teasing tale from the master of metafiction, a crusty Chesapeake Bay beachcomber finds a computer disk labeled "Coming Soon!!!" Next up is a memo from a newly emeritus professor/novelist regarding the graduate application of one J. H. Johnson, an aspiring novelist. The reader learns that Johns "Hop" Hopkins (named after his parents' beloved alma mater, and Barth's longtime haunt)

is writing a showboat novel titled *Coming Soon!!!*, as is the Novelist Emeritus, who is revisiting his first book (not unlike Barth himself, whose first novel was *The Floating Opera*). So it's a case of dueling novels as the young upstart seeks to vanquish the aging mentor. Employing his signature wordplay and liberally salting his gleefully postmodern narrative with paeans to sailing, the Maryland coast, sex, and marriage, Barth, witty, wily, and a tad sentimental, muses over the creative process, the thin line between fact and fiction, growing old, and the tenuous survival of literature and theater in the digital age. Barth fans will enjoy this floating house of mirrors, but others, frankly, will be at sea. *Donna Seaman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Sweet:

What do you think of book? It is just for students since they're still students or this for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Only you can be answered for that concern above. Every person has various personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't to be compelled someone or something that they don't need do that. You must know how great as well as important the book *Coming Soon!!!*. All type of book could you see on many methods. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

Katherine Humphrey:

Information is provisions for anyone to get better life, information currently can get by anyone at everywhere. The information can be a expertise or any news even a huge concern. What people must be consider any time those information which is from the former life are challenging to be find than now is taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one the particular resource are convinced. If you find the unstable resource then you buy it as your main information you will have huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen inside you if you take *Coming Soon!!!* as the daily resource information.

Emmaline Jett:

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Fanny Rutledge:

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