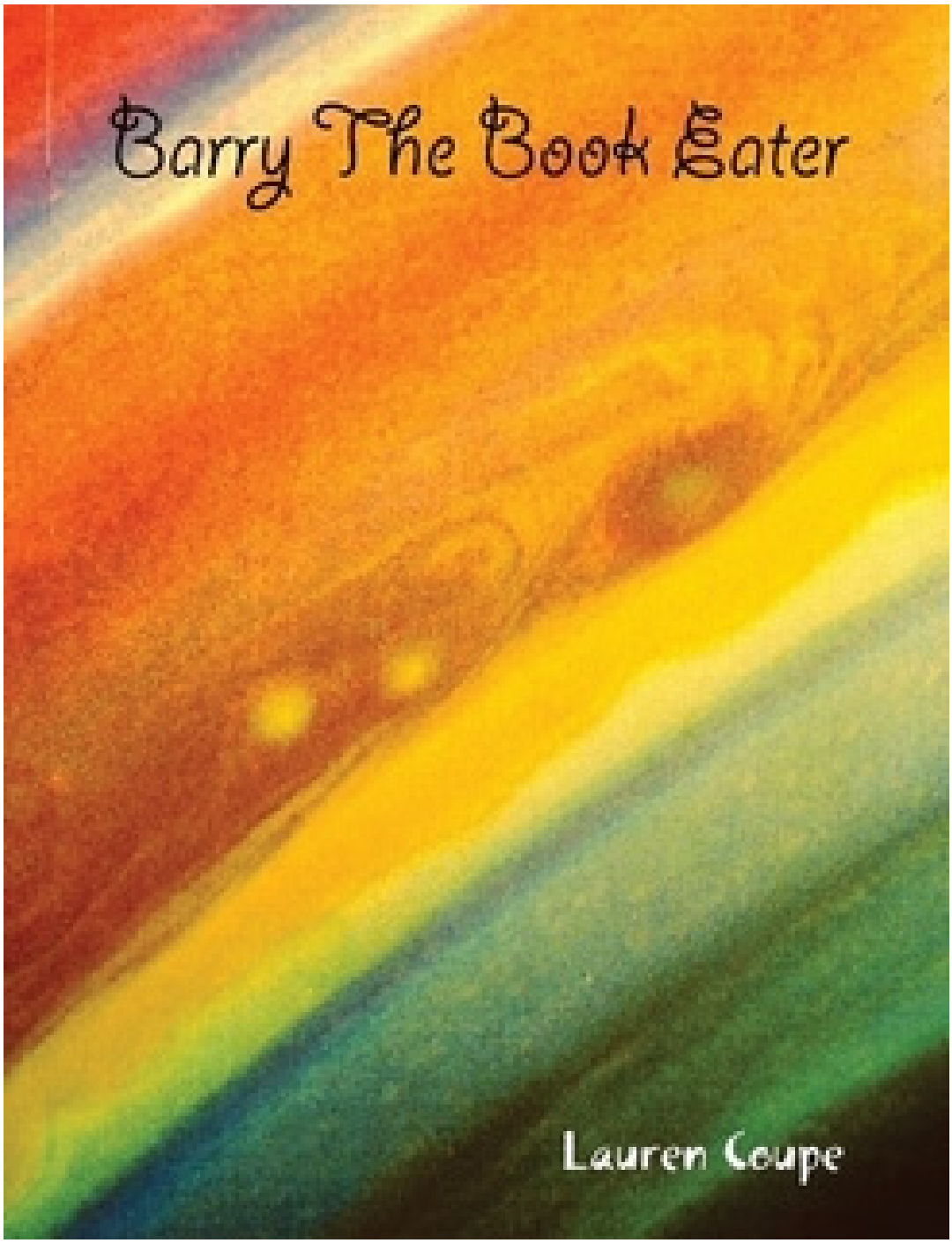
Barry The Book Eater
Lauren Coupe

Title: Barry The Book Eater
Written by: Lauren Coupe
Date: 01/09/2010
Website: http://laurencoupe.co.uk/

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Chapter 1

There is a storm brewing. The rain is pouring down, furiously splashing on the wet pavement below, one splash after another. Cars are driving unsteadily down the road, racing home, trying to avoid the rush hour traffic. Road workers are packing their equipment up for the day, unable to work due to the horrendous downpour of wet weather. The park to the right of the road is empty, the river is overflowing and the ice cream van splashes through the gates. A slight sound can be heard through the rain, it sounds almost like a tapping sensation, but whatever it is, it is getting louder, closer. The heavy breathing, almost breathless sound is close now, really close. It is Barry running, his feet beating along the pavement with each large step, with what looks like a very soggy book under his arm. He makes his way, almost drags himself, across the park, puddles splashing behind him as he frantically runs through them. He runs up the little stone steps to his house and bursts open the red front door. He is home.

The book rests on the top of the electric fire. Presumably this is to allow it to dry. Barry sits, staring longingly towards the book, cup of cocoa in hand. The surroundings are somewhat old fashioned. The place consists of red and brown painted walls, with lots of screwed up paper lying around in almost every spot, some has missed the bin, and other bits are just crumpled around the room to help with the décor. A small drop of rain water drips from Barry's matted hair into his cocoa, causing a little splash, but he doesn't care how wet he is, for the book is all he is interested in at this precise moment in time. He places his cup on the table next to him, and slowly stands. Water drips off him and forms a puddle on the brown wooden floorboard. He doesn't care, as he walks straight through it, and carefully takes the book from off the fire. He's clearly not impressed with the soggy nature of the book, so he leaves for the kitchen, book in hand, leaving behind a trail of water.

PING! The microwave comes to a standstill. Barry opens the microwave door, and sniffs at the book, which he does for some time, almost erotically. Whilst doing this, a slight smile occurs. He places the now crumpled book onto the counter. He takes a plate from the sink rack, and rests the book on it, whilst peering over towards the knife and fork stand, before shaking his head and getting other ideas. He opens the book to the first page. The pages have warped, and the ink looks like a long black smudge across where each line used to be. The book is clearly unreadable, but Barry doesn't want this book for reading, as he carefully tears the first crumpled page out, with it almost falling out itself due to its stiff nature. He holds the page up towards his face, and gives it a little sniff, before he starts nibbling at the edges, getting faster as he goes, before the page is no longer visible. He does the same with the next page, and the next, and the one after that, and the one before that as he starts to eat the pages in no particular order! The plate is empty. The book is gone. The book is inside Barry's belly.

Chapter 2

A bright light enters the bedroom as Barry pulls back the curtain. Barry smiles to himself as he looks out on the beautiful day outside. Children are playing in the park, mothers are treating them to ice cream and the road workers are setting up their equipment for the day at the side of the road. Barry lets out a long stretch, yawns and enters the bathroom. He sits himself down on the toilet for a while. He then gets up, pulls up his striped pyjama bottoms and fills the toilet bin up with the contents of what he just left in the toilet. These contents are that of discoloured, crumpled, wet, torn, soggy paper. Barry leaves the bathroom and goes back to the window in his room and opens it. He takes the bin, and empties its contents onto the street below. Some of the paper hits passers by, as they look angrily up towards the window, some hurling abuse and some raising their fists. Barry closes the window and places the bin back in the bathroom. He gives the now empty toilet a flush.

The bell rings on the book shop door as Barry enters. He clumsily bangs the door into an old lady who is stood browsing the bookshelf behind it. Barry quietly gestures 'sorry', and wanders to the back of the store. He browses the many different books on display, from the history section to the geography section, from the fiction section to the biographies section, but nothing quite draws him in like what's lurking around the corner. A sense of beauty, fulfilment and joy enters Barry's mind, as he sniffs the air, and turns the corner with glee. Around the corner, are more shelves stacked full of books, and a couple of naked pictures of the human body are pinned up on the wall around the area. Barry picks a book up off the shelf, and turns each page slowly, licking his lips, drooling, sweating. Yes, he has found the perfect book, the perfect food, and the perfect dinner. He flicks to a page that reveals a naked lady's body. By this point, Barry is getting rather hot under the collar. He starts to lick the page, rubbing his tongue across the naked picture. A passer by notices this, looking rather astonished, as he quickly exits.

Barry slams the book down onto the counter. 'I want to buy this book please', he says rather proudly, rubbing his brow with a tissue. The shop keeper places the book into a bag, giving strange looks at Barry as he collects his payment. 'Thank you', Barry says, clutching at the plastic bag in delight. He rushes out of the store, once again, banging the old lady with the door as it swings open.

Barry lies on his bed, staring straight at the ceiling. The hard back cover is all that is left of the book he purchased from the store, lying next to him in a rather lonely state. A smile forms across Barry's face, he is happy, for he is no longer a virgin in his world. He has just made love to the most passionate book on the planet.

The phone rings. Barry slowly opens his eyes. He had fallen asleep and was now in quite a daze as he trips over his shoes that are placed next to the bed. He walks over to the telephone on the wall. 'Hello?' he croaks down the phone, clearing his throat. 'Ah, okay…yes madam, okay…Barry is out of town at the moment…I will pass the message on and tell him to deliver the library books that are overdue to you ASAP…thank you, goodbye'. He puts the phone back on the wall and heads to the bathroom, where he starts to notice an itch 'down below'. The more he scratches, the

more the itching becomes unbearable. He enters the shower, in hope this will sooth his wounds.

DING! The bell on the book shop door rings as Barry enters. The door swings back heavily, knocking a ladder. The ladder wobbles, and crash! A young man comes crashing to the ground, the books he had in his hand ready to stack sprawl across the floor. Barry doesn't notice any of this, for he is eager to get to the back of the store, back around that corner for more pleasure.

He makes his way quickly to the back of the store and spots the perfect book. A naked blonde is on the cover. There are a handful of people browsing the books in this section. Barry quickly grabs the book and looks sharply over his shoulder. A man gives him a peculiar look. Barry kneels down once everyone has stopped looking in his direction, and crawls under a table. It is his way of hoping that nobody will spot him as he wraps himself inside his long coat.

Barry gives the check out boy a cook book at the desk. The check out boy grins.

'You seem to have been spending a lot of time in the sex aisle, sir'
'Have I?'
'You should be a pro by now'
'Well…I won't need a sex book today, thank you'

Barry scratches his crotch, a relieved look on his face as he does so. The check out boy looks in disgust then lets out a slight chuckle as he hands Barry the book back. 'Have a nice day, sir'.

Barry is slumped on his kitchen floor. His belly has grown twice the size that it used to be and dribble is seeping out of the corners of his mouth. The now 'destroyed' cook book is resting next to him. The cover reads 'The Worlds Most Fattiest Recipes'.

Chapter 3

Barry is sat inside a doctor's surgery. He sits in front of the doctor, scratching his groin, his clothes looking very tight on him as his belly flops over his trousers. 'Never mind the STD; you have put on an awful lot of weight since we last met 2 months ago' the doctor looks concerned. He leans forward and takes some purple pills out of his drawer. He hands them to Barry. 'I want you to take two of these a day – they are slimming pills' the doctor says. He then hands Barry some cream. 'Rub this on your penis twice a day…it should get rid of the STD'.

A week has passed since Barry's doctor visit. Slimming and exercise books are covering the floor of his living room like a carpet. Barry is punching a punch bag that is hanging from the ceiling; his huge muscles are visible as his sweaty vest sticks to his skin. There is a knock at the door. Barry wipes his face with a towel and jogs to

open it. A lady is stood there dressed in a short blue skirt with matching top. 'Hello there, stud' she winks and a smile fills her face. Barry gestures for her to come in. She struts into the room and gasps. 'So many books…I never took you for a reader' she drops herself down on the sofa, and rubs her thigh, slowly licking her lips as she stares at Barry, encouraging him to go over to her. He walks towards her slowly, when all of a sudden the doorbell rings. He jogs over and opens it. A delivery man is stood there holding a parcel. 'If you could just sign here please sir…' Barry snatches the pen in excitement out of the delivery mans hand and quickly signs for his package. He takes the package from the man and abruptly closes the door in his face. He runs into the kitchen and rips open the packaging. The lady follows him in. 'What is it? What's so important?' Barry stares, a smile forms across his face and he bounces around the room. 'It's here!' The cover of the book he has just taken out of the packaging reads 'How to Become a Babe Magnet'. The lady looks disgusted as she stares at the book. She slowly reads the title of the book out loud, almost to make sure that what she is reading is really in front of her. 'Don't I mean anything to you anymore?' She looks deeply hurt. Barry stops admiring the book for a moment and looks up towards her. 'Hey' he says in a rather soft, sympathetic voice, placing a hand on the lady's cheek and slowly stroking it. 'You know that you will always be my favourite little fuck buddy, don't you?' The lady pushes Barry's hand away and moves closer to the door. 'I don't want to be just your fuck buddy, Barry! We've been together ever since we were kids and I thought that there was something more between us, but I guess I was wrong!' Barry looks defeated. 'It's only a book…' he softly says, trying to calm things down. 'It's over, Barry' the lady says as she quickly turns around and leaves, slamming the front door behind her.

Barry walks proudly down the street, babe in one arm, babe in another. He is dressed very fashionable, showing off a pair of Gucci sunglasses. He leads the babes into a bar. They unlink their arms and the babes go and sit down. Men wolf whistle as the babes walk past them, flicking their blonde hair behind their shoulders. Barry walks over to the babes' table with some drinks. The babes look identical, almost like twins. One of the babes starts to look edgy as Barry sits down. 'I have to go' she says. Barry looks unhappy.

'But…why?'
'I just have to, okay?'
'No need for attitude, at least explain first?'
'I can't'
'But that's not supposed to happen! The book…you're supposed to do everything I say! You're supposed to be attracted to me like you've never been attracted to anyone else before! And you're supposed to suck my cock!'

Barry is shouting. Everyone in the bar is staring. The babe stands up to leave. 'I've just come on my period, okay!?' and she storms out of the bar. Barry sits there in disbelief. He mutters under his breath 'periods were never covered in the book I guess…' There is a long pause. The other babe grabs Barry's hand. 'I'll suck your cock' she smiles.

Barry is mesmerized as he sits watching The Superman Movie in his living room. 'I cannot believe I've never seen this before' he says to himself. 'Wouldn't it be awesome to be a superhero?' Barry stares into space and smiles, as he dreams about

flying around the world wearing a big cape, sleeping with lots of women and having a penis made of steel.

Barry runs over to a worker in the bookstore he has entered. 'Excuse me…do you have any superhero books?' The worker leads Barry over to a section titled 'Books for Geeks'. Barry quickly browses through the superhero content on display. A well presented man carrying a thick book walks up to him. 'I have the perfect superhero book for you…if you're interested?' The man grins. Barry stops browsing and shows an interest in the book the man is carrying. 'It will teach you all of the powers only a superhero can possess. Of course, it is only fiction, but maybe one for the kids, no?' Barry grins. 'Thank you kind sir…this might be just the book that I am looking for.'

Chapter 4

Barry wakes up, the rain outside pattering on his window. Barry realises that something is very wrong. Something very peculiar is happening and he looks scared as he notices that his nose is almost touching the ceiling! He is floating. He laughs with joy. It worked!

He floats downwards onto the floor below and rushes into the bathroom. He immediately pulls down his trousers and looks at his crotch in the mirror. 'Cock of steel' he mutters to himself, then laughs, punches the air and shouts 'Cock of steel!'

Barry enters a fancy dress shop. 'I need a suit' he tells the store owner as he rushes over. 'Well then you've come to the right place' the store owner chuckles. Barry browses through the many costumes on display, feeling the different materials. The store owner pulls out a Superman costume and shows it to Barry. 'No…I can't. Superman would probably get his copyright lawyers onto me' Barry replies. The store owner looks bemused as he hangs the costume back up on its rail. Barry then stops to a halt. He has spotted the perfect costume. It is a skin tight all in one green costume with a bright pink cape, pink eye mask and pink underpants that sit nicely over the top of the green tights. The store owner takes it off the rail for Barry to have a closer look. 'I'm not really sure if pink and green are your colours, sir…' Barry examines the underpants closely. 'I don't care' he replies 'these underpants look as though they will fit nicely over the crotch area, very firm and tight…oh yeah…' The store owner stares at Barry in disbelief. 'Oh' says Barry, 'I'll also have a pair of Mickey Mouse ears too please'.

Barry is stood in front of his bedroom mirror in his new superhero costume. He notices that the Mickey Mouse ears are slightly wonky on his head, so he adjusts them. 'Cock Master', Barry grins. He removes the underpants, and in permanent marker he writes the letter C on the front of them. He then grabs a book off the floor and puts it on the oven hob to cook.

A lady is screaming for help in a dark alleyway. There is a tiny kitten sat meowing at her, as she cowers in the corner of the darkness. Barry floats down. 'Have no fear,

Cock Master is here'. 'Please! Save me!' The lady cries. Barry picks up the cat and throws it over the high wall. It lets out a yelp as it lands over the other side. 'How can I ever repay you?' the lady asks. 'Well…' Barry replies, 'they don't call me the Cock Master for nothing', he lifts up one half of his eye mask and lets out a wink. A person is sat in the shadows, watching.

As Barry walks out of the dark alleyway, the well presented man from the library approaches him. 'Hello there' the man says. 'You have incredible powers…where are you from? How did you get them?' Barry stands and thinks about the question for a minute. 'I eat books' Barry says as he floats away. The man chuckles, as he removes a book from his back pocket. 'Then maybe I should do the same…' he mutters to himself, staring at the cover which reads 'How to Kill a Superhero'.

Lauren Coupe writes for:

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