



Down River: A Novel

By John Hart



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Down River is the winner of the 2008 Edgar Award for Best Novel.

Everything that shaped him happened near that river....

Now its banks are filled with lies and greed, shame, and murder....

John Hart's debut, *The King of Lies*, was compelling and lyrical, with Janet Maslin of *The New York Times* declaring, "There hasn't been a thriller as showily literate since Scott Turow came along." Now, in *Down River*, Hart makes a scorching return to Rowan County, where he drives his characters to the edge, explores the dark side of human nature, and questions the fundamental power of forgiveness.

Adam Hase has a violent streak, and not without reason. As a boy, he saw things that no child should see, suffered wounds that cut to the core and scarred him. The trauma left him passionate and misunderstood—a fighter. After being narrowly acquitted of a murder charge, Adam is hounded out of the only home he's ever known, exiled for a sin he did not commit. For five long years he disappears, fades into the faceless gray of New York City. Now he's back and nobody knows why, not his family or the cops, not the enemies he left behind.

But Adam has his reasons.

Within hours of his return, he is beaten and accosted, confronted by his family and the women he still holds dear. No one knows what to make of Adam's return, but when bodies start turning up, the small town rises against him and Adam again finds himself embroiled in the fight of his life, not just to prove his own innocence, but to reclaim the only life he's ever wanted.

Bestselling author John Hart holds nothing back as he strips his characters bare. Secrets explode, emotions tear, and more than one person crosses the brink into deadly behavior as he examines the lengths to which people will go for money, family, and revenge.

A powerful, heart-pounding thriller, *Down River* will haunt your thoughts long after the last page is turned.

Praise for John Hart and *The King of Lies*

"Treat yourself to something new and truly out of the ordinary."

---*Rocky Mountain News*

"A top-notch debut. Hart's prose is like Raymond Chandler's, angular and hard."

--*Entertainment Weekly* (grade A)

"A gripping performance."

---*People* magazine

"A marriage of carefully crafted prose alongside have-to-keep-reading suspense."

---*The Denver Post*

"A masterful piece of writing."

---*The News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC)

"A gripping mystery/thriller and a fully fleshed, thoughtful work of literature."

---*Winston-Salem Journal*

"*The King of Lies* moves and reads like a book on fire."

---Pat Conroy

"John Hart's debut . . . is that most engrossing of rarities, a well-plotted mystery novel that is written in a beautifully poetic style."

---Mark Childress, author of *Crazy in Alabama*

"Grisham-style intrigue and Turow-style brooding."

---*The New York Times*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Scott Sowers delivers a solid performance reading Hart's powerful second novel. Five years ago, Adam Chase was put on trial for the murder of a local teenager. Although he was acquitted of the crime, the majority of Rowan County, N.C., was never convinced of his innocence. The resulting hostility and humiliation compelled him to leave his hometown and escape to the anonymous streets of New York. A phone call from one of his oldest friends brings Adam back home, where he finds himself embroiled in a thick web of old family secrets and lies that lead back to that murder and to a death that has haunted him and his family for more than two decades. Hart writes with an intimate sense of melancholy and loss that Sowers resonates perfectly. Using a low-key, Southern accent to good advantage, Sowers draws the listener into the story from the very beginning with his simple, earnest delivery, and holds them tight.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

John Hart's 2006 debut, *The King of Lies* (**** Selection Sept/Oct 2006), earned an Edgar nomination for Best First Novel. Most reviewers agree that his sophomore effort is a worthy successor. The plot moves energetically through interesting terrain: a southern county torn apart by the possibility of easy wealth, a family ruptured by suspicion, and a community that despises the book's protagonist. The *New York Times* criticized Hart for overblown writing and stale imagery but grudgingly praised the story's vigorous plot and feverish pace. With *Down River*, Hart garners comparisons to Raymond Chandler, John Grisham, and Scott Turow. This illustrious list should be recommendation enough for most readers.

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review *King of Lies* (2006), Hart's debut, was gripping and stylishly written, but it pales in comparison to this complex, emotionally charged novel. Adam Chase returns home to small-town North Carolina after five years living in New York City. He left his hometown—or, in fact, was run out of town—after he was acquitted of murder. He has returned home because his family is there and because everyone he has ever loved is there. But when his oldest friend goes missing, and Adam is beaten to a pulp by his friend's father's stooges, he begins to regret his decision. As he tries to reconnect with family and friends, Adam learns that some people he's known all his life are hiding dark secrets—and that the truth surrounding the murder he was accused of five years ago is more frightening and closer to home than he could have imagined. *Down River* is a beautifully constructed story of personal redemption, family secrets, and murder—a small-town epic, if there is such a thing. Hart dexterously juggles a large cast of characters and several intricate plotlines, and when he starts to tie together the threads of the various stories—well, that's when the real magic begins. A truly splendid novel with a deep emotional core. Pitt, David

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christine Curnutt:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also get a life style. This reading practice give you lot of advantages. The huge benefits you got of course the knowledge your information inside the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The details you get based on what kind of book you read, if you want get more knowledge just go with schooling books but if you want sense happy read one

along with theme for entertaining such as comic or novel. The particular Down River: A Novel is kind of publication which is giving the reader unstable experience.

Raymond Bryan:

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Judy Bowen:

This Down River: A Novel is brand new way for you who has intense curiosity to look for some information mainly because it relief your hunger of information. Getting deeper you into it getting knowledge more you know or you who still having little bit of digest in reading this Down River: A Novel can be the light food for you because the information inside that book is easy to get by anyone. These books build itself in the form and that is reachable by anyone, yep I mean in the e-book form. People who think that in book form make them feel sleepy even dizzy this e-book is the answer. So there is absolutely no in reading a book especially this one. You can find actually looking for. It should be here for you. So , don't miss the idea! Just read this e-book kind for your better life as well as knowledge.

Faye Berg:

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