



# ESSENTIAL THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU DIDN'T KNOW



MATH EXPLAINS YOUR WORLD

"Where else does math become a romp, full of entertaining tricks and turns?" —BRYCE CHRISTENSEN, *BOOKLIST*

## JOHN D. BARROW

**"Barrow's wonderfully informative book should charm both lovers and haters of mathematics."**

—Sheldon Lee Glashow, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physics

Have you ever wondered why you always seem to get stuck in the longest line? Why two's company but three's a crowd? Or why there are six degrees of separation instead of seven?

Mathematics can reveal things about our surprisingly complex world that just can't be learned in any other way. In this hugely informative and endlessly entertaining book, eminent cosmologist and writer John D. Barrow takes the most baffling of everyday phenomena—from the odds of winning the lottery to the physics of sobriety tests and the reasoning behind divorce settlements—and explains why things work the way they do. With simple math, lucid explanations, and accompanying illustrations, he sheds light on the dark and shadowy corners of the world we all think we understand so well.

"I suspect the craft behind this fun book will only really come to light as we attempt to tell Barrow's stories to our friends. Suddenly, we will realize how much effort Barrow has expended in explaining difficult things simply."

—Simon Ings, *Daily Telegraph*

**JOHN D. BARROW** is a professor of mathematical sciences and director of the Millennium Mathematics Project at Cambridge University. A Fellow of the Royal Society, he is the author of *The Book of Nothing*, *The Constants of Nature*, and the award-winning play *Infinities*. In 2008, he was awarded The Royal Society's Faraday Prize for the communication of science. He lives in Cambridge, England.

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