



Once a Runner: A Novel

By John L. Parker Jr.

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Originally self-published in 1978, *Once a Runner* captures the essence of competitive running—and of athletic competition in general—and has become one of the most beloved sports novels ever published.

Inspired by the author's experience as a collegiate champion, the story focuses on Quenton Cassidy, a competitive runner at fictional Southeastern University whose lifelong dream is to run a four-minute mile. He is less than a second away when the turmoil of the Vietnam War era intrudes into the staid recesses of his school's athletic department. After he becomes involved in an athletes' protest, Cassidy is suspended from his track team. Under the tutelage of his friend and mentor, Bruce Denton, a graduate student and former Olympic gold medalist, Cassidy gives up his scholarship, his girlfriend, and possibly his future to withdraw to a monastic retreat in the countryside and begin training for the race of his life against the greatest miler in history.

A rare insider's account of the incredibly intense lives of elite distance runners, *Once a Runner* is an inspiring, funny, and spot-on tale of one man's quest to become a champion.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Part training manual, part religious tract, part love story, and all about running, *Once a Runner* is so inspiring it could be banned as a performance-enhancing drug.” —Benjamin Cheever, author of *Strides*

“By far the most accurate fictional portrayal of the world of the serious runner...a marvelous description of the way it really is.” —Kenny Moore, *Sports Illustrated*

“The best piece of running fiction around. Beg, borrow, or buy a copy, and you’ll never need another motivator.” —Dave Langlais, *Runner’s World*

"The best novel ever written about running."--*Runner's World*

From the Publisher

Truly a cult classic. Now in its 8th Printing!

About the Author

John L. Parker, Jr. has written for *Outside*, *Runner’s World*, and numerous other publications. A graduate of the University of Florida’s College of Journalism as well as its College of Law, Parker has been a practicing attorney, a newspaper reporter and columnist, a speechwriter for then Governor Bob Graham, and editorial director of *Running Times* magazine. The author of *Once a Runner*, *Again to Carthage*, and *Racing the Rain*, he lives in Gainesville, Florida, and Bar Harbor, Maine.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Rudy Lapan:

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Phyllis Granger:

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Maria Green:

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