



## Racing the Rain: A Novel

By John L. Parker Jr.

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**Racing the Rain: A Novel** By John L. Parker Jr.

From the author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Once a Runner*—“The best novel ever written about running” (*Runner’s World*)—comes that novel’s prequel, the story of a world-class athlete coming of age in the 1950s and 60s on Florida’s Gold Coast.

Quenton Cassidy’s first foot races are with nature itself: the summer storms that sweep through his subtropical neighborhood. Shirtless, barefoot, and brown as a berry, Cassidy is a skinny, mouthy kid with aspirations to be a great athlete. As he explores his primal surroundings, along the Loxahatchee River and the nearby Atlantic Ocean, he is befriended by Trapper Nelson, “the Tarzan of the Loxahatchee,” a well-known eccentric who lives off the land.

In junior high school, quite by chance, Cassidy discovers an ability to run long distances, but his real dream is to be a basketball star. Still, Cassidy absorbs Nelson’s view of running as a way of relating to and interacting with the natural world. Though he is warned of Nelson’s checkered past, Cassidy dismisses the stories as superstitious gossip, until his small town is stunned by the disappearance of a prominent judge and his wife. Cassidy’s loyalty to his friend is severely tested just as his opportunity to make his mark as a gifted runner comes to fruition.

John Parker’s prequel to the *New York Times* bestseller *Once a Runner* vividly captures how a runner is formed and the physical endurance, determination, and mindset he develops on the way to becoming a champion. *Racing the Rain* is an epic coming-of-age classic about the environments and friendships that shape us all.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

##### **Praise for *Racing the Rain*:**

“Dreamlike . . . The Florida imagery is as thick as the air is humid . . . The toughness required [to be a world-class runner] shines through in Cassidy in *Racing the Rain* as it once did in *Once a Runner*.” —***The Philadelphia Inquirer***

“[A] celebration of the purity of the sport.” —***Fort Worth Star-Telegram***

“For a young man or woman, the twenty-first century onslaught against purity and potential offers very few havens, but John L. Parker, Jr.’s lovely novel, *Racing the Rain*, reminds us that within amateur sports, especially a good foot race, all of us, athletes and spectators alike, might find what is most valuable in any life—the spirit to accomplish impossible things.”

—**Bob Shacochis, National Book Award winner and author of *The Woman Who Lost Her Soul***

“Much of the intrigue of the book lies in discovering how Cassidy developed into the elite runner he became, when and how his talent revealed itself, and how he came to recognize his extraordinary ability to focus, train, and endure pain with purpose. But *Racing the Rain* offers myriad other delights, not the least of which is the friendship Cassidy strikes up with a (real life) swamp man named Trapper Nelson . . . [The book is] loaded with elegance and evocative writing. . . . A worthy, compelling, and satisfying conclusion to the Quenton Cassidy trilogy.” —***Paste Magazine***

“In *Racing the Rain*, John L. Parker, Jr. not only creates the indomitable Quenton Cassidy, but perfectly captures the world that teaches him to be so enduring. From diving the Atlantic deeps to paddling the intracoastal waterways, young Cassidy develops the metabolism of a champion. Parker shows that the wilds of his beloved Loxahatchee River are just as good a cradle for a miler as the Colorado mountains or the Oregon woods. I was with him all the way.”

—**Kenny Moore, former Senior Writer, *Sports Illustrated*, and 1968 and 1972 Olympic Marathoner**

“If you, too, are a Quenton Cassidy geek, you must read the prequel to John L. Parker Jr.’s classic novel, *Once a Runner*. It’s called *Racing the Rain* and it evocatively reveals why Cassidy became consumed with ‘The Trial of Miles; Miles of Trials.’” —**David Wiley, *Runner’s World***

“I absolutely loved this book...Filled with vivid descriptions that tingle the senses, *Racing the Rain* is a story of innocence and coming of age, and of ignoring self-doubt and overcoming limitations imposed by others. John L. Parker, Jr. shows us that with hard work, perseverance, friendships and loyalty, dreams do come true.”

—**Marshall Ulrich, extreme endurance athlete and author of *Running on Empty: An Ultramarathoner’s Story of Love, Loss, and a Record-Setting Run Across America***

“*Racing the Rain*’s depiction of the running life and the Florida of an era gone by is wonderfully authentic. Among those who’ve tried to capture the drama and beauty of the sport, John L. Parker, Jr. is surely the best.”

—**Jeff Galloway, U.S. Olympian**

“*Racing the Rain* is a clear explanation of the beauty of our simple sport, and why that beauty is so priceless, and why becoming an athlete, and in particular a runner, and in particular a racer is so special. *Racing the Rain* is about friendship and struggle and the fun of being a kid who is feeling his way through life. Truly, every runner will say ‘I know what you mean, John’ when they read this book!”

—**Bill Rodgers, four-time winner of the Boston Marathon**

“If you liked the way Parker captured the endurance, determination and mindset of elite training in *Once a Runner*, you’ll appreciate *Racing the Rain*.”

—**Northwest Runner Magazine**

“[*Once a Runner* is] the best novel about running ever written.”

—**Runner's World**

“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.”

—**David Langlais, Runner's World**

“Time has not taken a toll on this gem. . . . Runners will find inspirational passages everywhere that they will want to save.”

—**Star Tribune**

“*Again to Carthage* is a worthy sequel, and could make a runner out of a couch potato. . . . *Carthage* becomes a training manual, a nutrition guide, a love story, and a celebration of friendship based on the shared experience of runners training to the very threshold of what the body can endure.”

—**Chicago Sun-Times**

“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: Running Through History with an Unlikely Athlete*, in Runner's World**

“Don’t let twenty years of pent-up anticipation and expectation ruin your run through this book. It’s paced a little like a marathon—controlled start, strong finish. . . . Don’t think you have to be a world-class athlete to connect with Quenton Cassidy and love this book. If you’ve ever trained and competed at your own highest level, you’ll get this guy.”

—**The Kansas City Star**

“A finely crafted work of fiction.”

—**St. Petersburg Times**

“*Once a Runner*’s famed ability to convey the thrill of the sport leaves its mark.”

—**St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

“Inspirational.”

—**Chicago Sun-Times**

“There is a remarkable parallel between the pacing of this novel and a well-run race.”

—**Ed Ayres, *Running Times***

“Perhaps the best novel ever written about running. There are parts of *Once a Runner* that are pure poetry. I enjoyed it thoroughly and have never read descriptions of what it is to run and race as accurate and compelling as Parker’s.”

—**Tim Jordan, *Track & Field News***

“The author conveys the raw emotions that come with hard workouts and racing in a way that resonates with people devoted to the sport.”

—**Buffalo News**

“[*Again to Carthage* is] one of the best accounts in print of the physical and emotional torments athletes endure in their superhuman efforts.”

—**St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

“Breathtaking, pulse-quicken, stunning . . . [*Again to Carthage*] will have you standing up and cheering, and pulling on your running shoes.”

—**Chicago Sun-Times**

“The last three paragraphs . . . they’re perfect. You might have seen them coming, but I still think you’ll find yourself breaking into a smile.”

—**Runner’s World**

“The training and racing sequences will resonate with anyone who has pinned on a race number whether for the Olympics or the neighborhood fun run.”

—**Galveston Daily News**

#### 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.

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Racing the Rain

## CHAPTER 1

### THE VERY EDGE OF THINGS

The first- and second-fastest kids in the second grade stood at the end of Rosedale Street in the early June heat, their bird chests heaving, asphalt fumes stinging their noses. They were so thin a mesh of blue veins showed under brown skin.

“It’s cuh-cuh-coming,” the smaller boy said, nodding toward the angry purple smudge on the horizon behind them. His skull was slightly elongated, somehow giving him a studious air.

“Couple minutes,” said the other, taller but just as brown and skinny, scrunching his bare toes into the sun-softened tar.

It would have been difficult for an adult to appreciate their boundless sense of possibilities as they stood waiting: the vastness of the coming summer, the endless expanse of school years ahead, the insignificance of their tiny lives when measured against any grown-up conception of time.

But for now they were simply oblivious to everything but the dark specter approaching Rosedale Street.

The sky darkened suddenly, and from nowhere a chilly wind began whipping through the Spanish moss in the live oaks across Bumby Avenue, raising goose bumps on their forearms. The boys leaned into a half crouch with hands on knees and waited.

The first fat drops splatted on the roadway, making little hissy puffs of steam, and as they began landing on the boys’ skin, a crack of thunder split the sky. They took off down the street in a blur of spindly legs and arms.

They were fairly evenly matched but were not really racing each other as much as simply trying to stay ahead of the deluge at their heels.

This moment always seemed magical to them: a bright tropical day loomed in front as a purple monsoon came on from behind. And they were thrilled as only children can be thrilled to exist for a moment at the very edge of things, at the buzzy existential margin of all possibilities. One might go fetch a Popsicle or be struck by lightning or live to a well-tended old age with golf clubs in the trunk. Whirl was king and all was in play.

All they knew was that for this moment in time they were racing the rain, and they were laughing laughing laughing.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Shirley Kistner:**

The publication untitled Racing the Rain: A Novel is the reserve that recommended to you to study. You can see the quality of the e-book content that will be shown to an individual. The language that author use to explained their ideas are easily to understand. The article writer was did a lot of exploration when write the book, so the information that they share to your account is absolutely accurate. You also will get the e-book of Racing the Rain: A Novel from the publisher to make you more enjoy free time.

#### **Junior Price:**

Typically the book Racing the Rain: A Novel has a lot details on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of advantage. The book was compiled by the very famous author. Mcdougal makes some research ahead of write this book. That book very easy to read you can get the point easily after scanning this book.

**James Baker:**

Can you one of the book lovers? If so, do you ever feeling doubt if you are in the book store? Aim to pick one book that you just dont know the inside because don't judge book by its protect may doesn't work the following is difficult job because you are scared that the inside maybe not while fantastic as in the outside seem likes. Maybe you answer could be Racing the Rain: A Novel why because the excellent cover that make you consider about the content will not disappoint a person. The inside or content is usually fantastic as the outside or cover. Your reading 6th sense will directly guide you to pick up this book.

**Harold Young:**

The book untitled Racing the Rain: A Novel contain a lot of information on this. The writer explains the woman idea with easy means. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read this. The book was published by famous author. The author brings you in the new period of literary works. You can easily read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or gadget, so you can read the book with anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can available their official web-site and also order it. Have a nice learn.

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