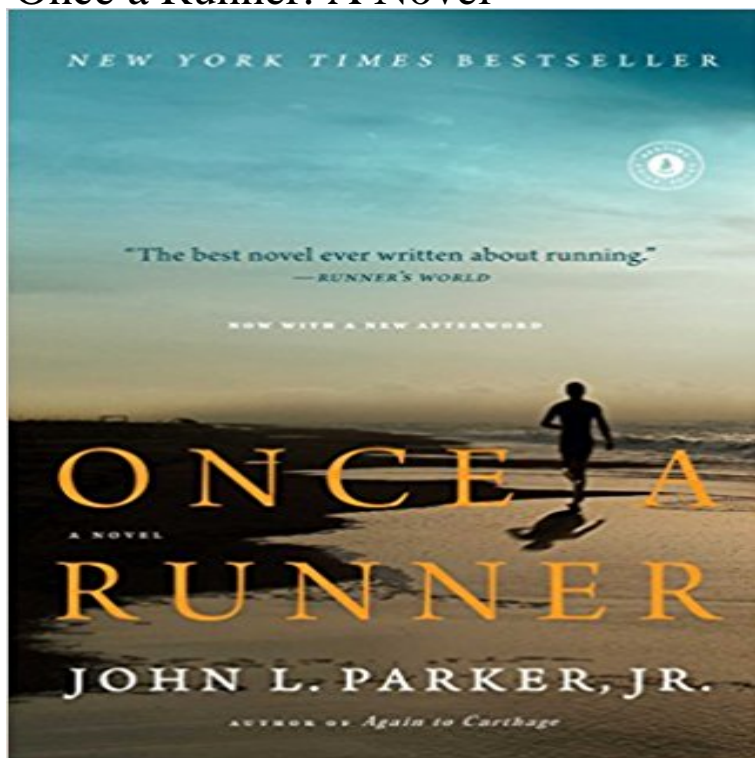


# Once a Runner: A Novel



Once a Runner captures the essence of what it means to be a competitive runner; to devote your entire existence to a single-minded pursuit of excellence. It has become one of the most beloved sports novels ever written. Originally self-published in 1978 and sold at road races out of the trunk of the authors car, the book eventually found its way into the hands of high school, college, and postgraduate athletes all over the country. Reading it became a rite of passage on many teams, and tattered copies were handed down like sacred texts from generation to generation. It ranked as the number one most sought-after out-of-print book in the United States in 2007. Once a Runner is the story of Quenton Cassidy, a collegiate runner at fictional Southeastern University whose lifelong dream is to run a four-minute mile. He is less than a second away when the political and cultural turmoil of the Vietnam War era intrudes into the staid recesses of his schools 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: a head-to-head match with the greatest miler in history. This book is a rare insiders account of the incredibly intense lives of elite distance runners; an inspiring, funny, and spot-on tale of one mans quest to become a champion.

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