

PRAISE FOR BONNIE JO CAMPBELL'S *ONCE UPON A RIVER*

"*Once Upon a River* is a beautiful piece of work. Margo Crane has the deadeye poise of her heroine Annie Oakley, and the tender heart of the child she is. When she sets out on her Michigan river journey, we are both delighted and terrified. We want her to make her way; we want her to be safe and happy. But the world is not kind to girl children on their own, and the river is as cold and dispassionate as some of those Margo meets—including the mother who abandoned her so long ago. Don't take up this book looking for one of those after-school specials, those straightforward tales of triumph over adversity. Margo knows her own wounded heart and all she has done wrong. She is fearless, pragmatic, and genuinely captivating. Never simple, never predictable, utterly wonderful. I just loved this book."

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*

"American fiction waited a long time for Bonnie Jo Campbell to come along. A lot of us, not only women, were looking for a fictional heroine who would be deeply good, brave as a wolverine, never a cry baby, as able as Sacagawea, with a strong and unapologetic sexuality. We wanted to feel her roots in some ancient story, we wanted Diana the huntress, but not her virginity; we wanted a real human girl who we could believe had been suckled by bears, or wolves. To give us heroines like this, the gods finally brought us Bonnie Jo Campbell, one of our most important and necessary writers, and Margo Crane, the central character of *Once Upon A River*, an outcast, feral beauty who can shoot like Annie Oakley, is her most poignant and mythic creation so far."

Jaimy Gordon, *Lord of Misrule*
(winner of the 2010 National Book Award)

"*Once Upon a River* will drag you through its rock-jagged rapids and smear your face with mud and blood and thrill you with its swift-moving current of prose that follows the coming-of-age odyssey of Margo Crane, an unforgettable heroine made of equal parts Huck Finn, Annie Oakley, and Janie Crawford. Throw on a life vest and get ready for one hell of a journey."

Benjamin Percy, *The Wilding and Refresh, Refresh*

"Margo first appeared in Campbell's debut book, *Women and Other Animals* (1999), and Campbell, a National Book Award finalist for *American Salvage* (2009), knows her protagonist so well, she conveys all that Margo does, thinks, and feels with transfixing sensuous precision, from the jolt of a gun to the muscle burn of rowing a boat against the current to the weight of a man.....A glorious novel destined to entrance and provoke."

Donna Seaman, *Booklist* *Starred review, 3/15/11

"Last year, when Campbell's *American Salvage* was both a National Book Award and a National Book Critics Circle Award finalist, readers woke up to a tremendous young talent...excellent for book clubs..."

Library Journal, "My Picks," 2/01/11

"National Book Award finalist and NBCC Award winner Bonnie Jo Campbell's *Once Upon A River*, a mythical novel about spirited 16-year-old Margo Crane and her river odyssey on a motor boat with a rifle through rural wilderness in search of her vanished mother, to Eva-Marie Von Hippel at Piper (Germany), and to Marcella Marini and Giuseppe Russo at Neri Pozza (Italy), by Raffaella De Angelis at William Morris Endeavor; and to Clare Smith at Harper Press (UK), all in pre-empts. Norton will publish in July 2011."

Publisher's Weekly, 2/22/11

"*Once Upon A River* is an extraordinary read which achieves that rare feat of matching lyrical writing with a narrative urgency and strength that demands the reader's attention. Her writing is so distinctive and strong and the sense of place so evocatively rendered, I don't see how anyone could fail to fall in love with this novel," said (Clare) Smith (HarperCollins UK).

Book Trade, 2/15/11

"This is the odyssey—full of adventure, heartbreak, terror, and extraordinary beauty—of Margo Crane, who will surely be one of the fictional characters for which our particular time and place will be remembered. Bonnie Jo Campbell has brought all of the gritty, sensual brilliance of *American Salvage* to this narrative of survival and self-discovery, but in *Once Upon A River* there is the thrill too, of the novel's space and sprawl. Always precise and shocking in her ability to render a moment so vividly you feel you've lived it, in this novel Campbell also offers us a generous vision of a whole world and a full life in her gorgeous prose. Both riveting and lyrical, familiar and mythical, a page-turner and a poem, you will not want to miss a word of this one."

Laura Kasischke, *In A Perfect World*

"*Once Upon A River* transforms the classic American hero into a fourteen year old girl, Margo, embarked on a quest to find her mother and a home. In an adventure that runs as deep and as sure as the river she navigates, Margo's story is an exploration of our most basic needs and struggles, a pioneer saga set in contemporary times. Hurrah for Bonnie Jo Campbell who gives us our freshest American heroine since Annie Oakley."

Claire Davis, *Winter Range*

"Who knew that Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* needed a sequel, or that Huck himself needed a sister? Here she is, Margo Crane, the gutsy heroine of Bonnie Jo Campbell's splendid *Once Upon A River*. Having once made the acquaintance of this singular river-daughter, you will surely never forget her."

Pinckney Benedict, *Miracle Boy*

"Reading *Once Upon a River* is like falling into some beguiling dream that you don't ever want to wake up from. The story of sixteen-year-old Margo Crane's search for love and family along Michigan's Stark River is both harrowing and exhilarating and will remind you why you started reading in the first place—to be carried away to a more vivid and compelling world and to meet some remarkable people you won't ever forget. So find a comfy chair, send the kids to the sitters', and call in sick to work, because once you start reading this enchanting novel you won't want to stop, and when you've finished the book and find yourself starting it all over again, you'll realize what many of us have already known, that Bonnie Jo Campbell is one of the most talented, savvy, and fearless writers at work today."

John Dufresne, *Requiem, Mass.*

"The sinew and fluency of Ms. Campbell's fiction are forces to be reckoned with and reveled in. *Once Upon A River* combines fierce cross currents of character and place—rapids and backwater, rot and fecundity—to generate a startling and indelible narrative."

Thomas Lynch, *Apparition & Late Fictions*

"*A River Runs Through It, The River Why, Old Man River*—those worshipers of mythic waterways—make way for a wild-eyed and wild-hearted and bigger than life guide who makes of this passage a story unlike any I know. Powerful, original, a tour de force, this is Bonnie Jo Campbell at her all-time best."

Jack Driscoll, *How Like An Angel*