

Along Came Mary: A Bad Girl Creek Novel

Jo-Ann Mapson



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USA Today called Jo-Ann Mapson's national bestseller, *Bad Girl Creek*, "a valentine to oceans of good women who survive bad beginnings and worse men." Now the author, hailed as "one of the most gifted writers of the contemporary urban West" (*Los Angeles Times*), brings back the hard-luck women of her acclaimed previous novel -- and introduces another indelible character into their midst.

"Me, I need a map to tell which town I'm in. I feel like ten miles of bad road, wondering how I got to where I am...." After finally wising up to her drunken rodeo-crooner lover ("Imagine Kevin Costner with an overbite"), Mary Madigan saddles up her twin Border collies and takes her act on the road, leaving miles of heartache and highway behind. Maddy's journey takes her across the South -- singing in and winning one karaoke contest after another -- and inexorably closer to a dreaded showdown with her past.

In Oklahoma City, she meets Rick, a journalist haunted by his own ghosts. After he loses his job, he travels to his childhood home to set up camp. When he first runs into Maddy, she gives him the cold shoulder. But he's charming, and persistent, and before Maddy knows it she's got a travel companion and a new lover (with an all-too-familiar set of tricks). Their travels will ultimately bring them to Bad Girl Creek, where the ladies know him as "Rotten Rick" -- because he broke Nance's heart -- and where the waters have already been troubled.

Phoebe's pregnancy is life-threatening, Nance's breakup diet has turned dangerously successful, Beryl is still struggling to adjust to life after prison, and HIV-positive Ness is distancing herself from the "healthy" world -- if you can call it that.

But these are the Bad Girl Creek ladies: they are resilient. They have character. And, above all, they love each other. The ways they all pull together, cheer each other on through good times and bad, and cope with every curveball life throws at them make up the heart and soul of this powerful new novel, a bighearted book certain to win this exceptional author a new legion of devoted readers.

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