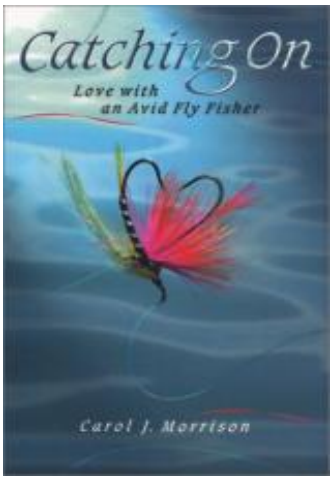
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Catching On: Love with an Avid Fly Fisher

by Carol J. Morrison



About the Book

At the beginning of **Catching On**, Ed, a Northwest native, assures his fiancée Carol that "marriage can be like fishing, the pursuit of that which is elusive but attainable." Carol, a born and bred Southerner, knows a whole lot about the elusive part.

In nineteen entertaining vignettes, some humorous, some spiritual, some probing, **Catching On** follows this relationship, as Ed's fly-fishing passion and the couple's inherent differences (he's a brown trout and she's a rainbow) threaten to cast a pall over it, illuminating issues familiar to anyone who has ventured loving and being loved?insecurity, misunderstanding, jealousy, vulnerability and joy.

In Carol's efforts to catch on to marriage and to Ed's magnificent obsession, she is helped and hindered by well-meaning observers. Matt, Ed's best friend who is single, has definite opinions about how women mix with fishing. Ed's father, Harry, adds a colorful combination of Shakespeare and stability. Carol's friend, Shasta, whose husband Tommy also has been bitten by the fly-fishing bug, tells Carol: "Ed's just a big old bigamist. They're all married to something else, you know."

But love and determination prevail. By book's end when Ed sincerely tells Carol: "I'm not married to fishing. I'm married to you," the reader?and Carol?are convinced.

Elsie Wiesel, holocaust survivor and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Peace, said, "As long as there is passion, there is hope." **Catching On** is a tribute to women, to men, to fly fishing, and to celebrating our loved ones' passions.

Discussion Guide

1. In the first story, "Hooked," Carol tells the reader that she knows "a whole lot about the elusive part" of marriage. As

you read the book, did you get glimpses of how Carol's prior unsuccessful marriages affected her? What were they? To what do you attribute her healthier relationship with Ed?

2. In "Opening Day," Carol reveals her fear that good things and everlasting love are meant for someone else. Where else do you find this "not enough to go around" theme in the book? What events and insights contribute to changes in this life-view?

3. Many books have been written about women and men who fish together, with the woman equally or more skilled and enthusiastic about the sport as the man. In **Catching On**, Carol enacts the more traditional role of envious observer. Do you think this portrayal of women and men is accurate today, as say, ten years ago?

4. Carol relocates from Mississippi to Washington with trepidation. Which of Carol's characteristics supported or did not support your image of a Southern woman? What contributed to her successful transition from the Deep South to the Northwest?

5. Ed states, on several occasions, that he's not a "real fly fisher." How common do you think it is to see others as the "real" possessors of a skill or of a competency? Why do you think this occurs?

6. Carol quotes Libby Roderick as saying "Women need to know they're powerful and men need to know they're good." Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

7. How do Ed's friend, Matt, who's single but looking, and Carol's friend, Shasta, also married to an avid fly fisher, help and hinder Ed and Carol's relationship? What functions, positive and negative, do friends serve in a marriage?

8. Harry, Ed's father, quotes from Shakespeare and the Bible. Which of his words of wisdom appeal to you? How is Ed like his father? How does he differ from him?

9. Competition plays a much smaller part in Carol and Ed's fishing than in other aspects of their lives. What kinds of competition exist between them? Do you think competitive attitudes and behavior are common in couples? Why?

10. "Opposites attract" but "birds of a feather flock together." Do both these adages apply to Ed and Carol, and if so, in what aspects of their relationship?

11. By the book's end, Carol has "caught on to" the importance of process rather than outcome, in Ed's fishing expeditions. To what else does she "catch on?"

12. Do you think Ed's and Carol's marriage is a typical one? Why or why not?

Author Bio

Carol Jane Morrison, writer, editor, speaker and therapist?is a Mississippi native who, after sixteen years as a Northwesterner, lives, as Jesse Winchester sings, "with her feet in Dixie and her head in the cool, blue North."

Carol wrote her first poem at age eight, and she continued writing poetry and stories throughout adolescence and

adulthood. Her muse beckoned more powerfully eight years ago, spurring her to study writing in the Seattle area with local novelists Janet Carey, Jack Remick, and Bob Ray, with editor Dorothy Wall in Berkeley, and with Natalie Goldberg on Cortes Island, British Columbia, Canada.

After six years as a college teacher and motivational counselor and fifteen years as a psychotherapist in private practice, Carol decreased her patient caseload in order to pursue her writing, editing and consulting interests. When her essay "Catching On" was published by *Gray's Sporting Journal*, Carol was inspired to write more about coming to understand her husband Ed's fly-fishing passion. That developed into her first book of creative non-fiction, **Catching On?Love with an Avid Fly Fisher**, which recently was awarded the 2003 Jim Angell Award for the best first book by a Presbyterian.

She currently creates and leads writing workshops and classes in the Seattle area for the King County Library System, the North Bend Library, the Redmond Association for the Spoken Word and for various community and academic organizations.

Carol was married twice before?to a professional tennis player and to a deep-sea diver. Both experiences initiated her to the inner and outer lives of obsessed men and these experiences contributed material for **Catching On**.

She and her third (and please, Lord, last) husband, Ed, live and love on the south fork of the Snoqualmie River in North Bend, Washington, with their cats, Emmylou Harris and Seattle Sunshine. Most of the time, Carol doesn't even care if Ed goes fishing.

Critical Praise

"Feel sorry for Ed Morrison. He taught his wife Carol to fly fish, never tumbling to the fact that what she really had in mind wasn't a fish but this great book."

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