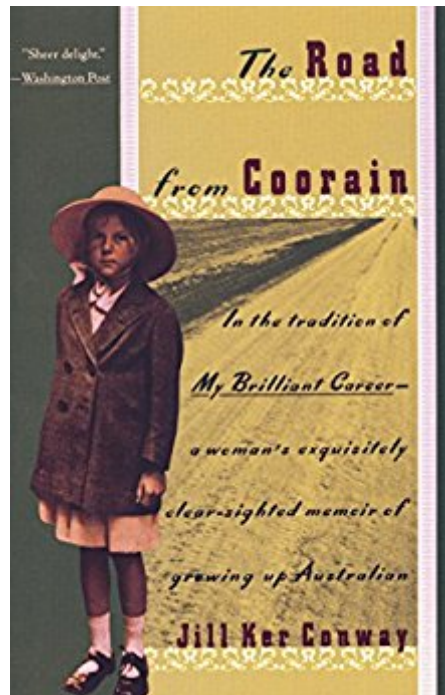




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# The Road From Coorain (Vintage Departures)



## Synopsis

Jill Ker Conway is a noted historian, specializing in the experience of women in America, and was the first woman president of Smith College.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Jill Ker Conway's autobiography, *The Road From Coorain*, is a beautifully written memoir. The flow of the narrative and the broad vocabulary used throughout the book are exquisite. Although the impact of her life story is sometimes slowed by her mother's wants and needs, these experiences helped shape Conway and, as such, are an integral part of her story. Detailing her life growing up in the Australian outback during the second third of the twentieth century, Conway is able to draw the reader into that era. The beauty of the landscape and the harsh reality of the elements, the economic cycles, and the psychological impact on both men and women of these influences are vividly described. The elitism and the class differences between landed individuals and those who managed or worked on the stations become evident as the Conway family's fortunes roller coaster between wealth and economic hardship. Societal attitudes toward women's roles and

acceptable occupations could have discouraged Conway from ever progressing. However, Jill Ker Conway's intellectual strength, coupled with her work ethic, propelled her beyond those roles accepted and available to women in the mid-twentieth century to becoming a university professor and eventually president of Smith College. Today's young women may view much of "The Road From Coorain" as ancient history. Women who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s may remember or may have experienced situations similar to those Conway encountered. All will be inspired by and amazed at Jill Ker Conway's life and accomplishments.

This book, *The Road from Coorain*, was a great fit for me as I too grew up on a sheep ranch and made a life off the ranch. The experience of growing up on the ranch affected the remainder of my life as growing up on a sheep station in Australia did the author. The isolation brought independence and inventiveness. The writing is descriptive and brings you to the scene--I could smell the odor of the lanolin at shearing time!

An inspirational story for young women who are trying to understand how far they can go in their lives and careers.

When I finally got around to reading this book I really enjoyed it. I had assumed it would be an entertaining childhood story of life on a sheep station in Australia, but it was so much more. I should have known a woman of such achievement would have written an interesting, thought-provoking story. She not only shared her struggle as a woman in a male-dominated profession, but also a look inside the attitudes of the typical educated Australian in that era. This one is a keeper.

The book provides an intimate look at the progress from the back country of Australia to a busy world. It is interesting to see how different cultures perceive one's place in life as well as the customs and expectations that govern people, especially women. To be different is often intimidating. Jill's thoughts and reactions to who she is inside and whom she becomes are fascinating. Though sometimes ponderous because of the long, dense paragraphs, the book is rewarding.

Jill Ker Conway well depicted life and described the environment on an outback NSW sheepstation:

the struggles, the work, the droughts with their searing dust storms. I assume this novel is somewhat autobiographical in describing the yearnings of a young intelligent woman who wished to escape fulfilling the expectations of family, which choked her aspirations to pursue her dreams. The novel is an authentic, credible, and enjoyable read for any educated woman who was emerging into adulthood in the era.

Enjoyed it but the end was disappointing..

ONE OF THE BEST BOOK DISCUSSIONS WE HAVE EVER HAD, WAS ABOUT THIS BOOK. IF YOU LIKE NON-FICTION, DON'T MISS THIS STORY ABOUT A WOMAN WHO WAS BROUGHT UP IN THE AUSTRALIAN OUTBACK AND ENDED UP AS THE HEADMISTRESS OF SMITH COLLEGE IN MASSACHUSETTS.

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