



The Road from Coorain

By Jill Ker Conway

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The Road from Coorain By Jill Ker Conway

In a memoir that pierces and delights us, Jill Ker Conway tells the story of her astonishing journey into adulthood—a journey that would ultimately span immense distances and encompass worlds, ideas, and ways of life that seem a century apart.

She was seven before she ever saw another girl child. At eight, still too small to mount her horse unaided, she was galloping miles, alone, across Coorain, her parents' thirty thousand windswept, drought-haunted acres in the Australian outback, doing a "man's job" of helping herd the sheep because World War II had taken away the able-bodied men. She loved (and makes us see and feel) the vast unpeopled landscape, beautiful and hostile, whose uncertain weathers tormented the sheep ranchers with conflicting promises of riches and inescapable disaster. She adored (and makes us know) her large-visioned father and her strong, radiant mother, who had gone willingly with him into a pioneering life of loneliness and bone-breaking toil, who seemed miraculously to succeed in creating a warmly sheltering home in the harsh outback, and who, upon her husband's sudden death when Jill was ten, began to slide—bereft of the partnership of work and love that had so utterly fulfilled her—into depression and dependency.

We see Jill, staggered by the loss of her father, catapulted to what seemed another planet—the suburban Sydney of the 1950s and its crowded, noisy, cliquish school life. Then the heady excitement of the University, but with it a yet more demanding course of lessons—Jill embracing new ideas, new possibilities, while at the same time trying to be mother to her mother and resenting it, escaping into drink, pulling herself back, striking a balance. We see her slowly gaining strength, coming into her own emotionally and intellectually and beginning the joyous love affair that gave wings to her newfound self.

Worlds away from Coorain, in America, Jill Conway became a historian and the first woman president of Smith College. Her story of Coorain and the road from Coorain startles by its passion and evocative power, by its understanding of the ways in which a total, deep-rooted commitment to place—or to a dream—can at once liberate and imprison. It is a story of childhood as both Eden and anguish, and of growing up as a journey toward the difficult life of the free.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

At age 11, Conway (*Women Reformers and American Culture*) left the arduous life on her family's sheep farm in the Australian outback for school in war-time Sydney, burdened by an emotionally dependent, recently widowed mother. A lively curiosity and penetrating intellect illuminate this unusually objective account of the author's progress from a solitary childhood--the most appealing part of the narrative--to public achievement as president of Smith College and now professor at MIT. Gifted with an ability to adapt to a wide range of cultures and people and despite ingrained Australian prejudice against intellectuals, Conway devoted herself to the study of history and literature, spurred on by excellent British-style schooling. Her further adventures could easily make a rewarding second volume. Paperback rights to Vintage; QPBC alternate.

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From Library Journal

Conway spent her first 11 years in the windswept grasslands of Australia, where her father owned 30,000 acres of arid land. Though his ability to understand the land was extensive, an eight-year drought finally defeated him, and he committed suicide. A few years later, Conway's oldest brother died in an automobile accident. The two deaths plunged her mother into depression. Out of this tale of hard work, drought, and sorrow, Conway emerges with character and personal strength. From the University of Sydney, she went on to study history at Harvard and eventually became the first woman president of Smith College. This inspiring book tells in full the details of her life and thoughts up to the time she left for America. Quality Paperback Book Club selection.

- *Judith Nixon, Purdue Univ. Libs., W. Lafayette, Ind.*

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Review

"A small masterpiece of scene, memory and very stylish English. I've been several times to Australia; this book was the most rewarding of all" -- John Kenneth Galbraith "The Road from Coorain is the work of a writer who relentlessly tugs at the cultural fences around her until they collapse, leaving her solitary under an immense Australian sky, enlarged to herself at least" New York Times Book Review "This book, an extraordinarily gripping and inspiring work, will take place as one of the few heroic stories of girlhood" Carolyn Heilbrun "Immensely readable, elegant and well-crafted" Sydney Morning Herald

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Caldwell:

Book is to be different for each and every grade. Book for children until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for us. The book *The Road from Coorain* was making you to know about other knowledge and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The reserve *The Road from Coorain* is not only giving you far more new information but also for being your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your current spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship with all the book *The Road from Coorain*. You never sense lose out for everything if you read some books.

Douglas Stevens:

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Florence Davis:

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Daniel Metz:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or perhaps go to the outside with them friends and family or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent they free time just watching TV, or perhaps playing video games all day long. If you wish to try to find a new activity that's look different you can read a book. It is really fun in your case. If you enjoy the book that you read you can spent all day every day to reading a guide. The book *The Road from Coorain* it doesn't matter what good to read. There are a lot of folks that recommended this book. These folks were enjoying reading this book. When you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy often the e-book. You can m0ore effortlessly to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not to fund but this book has high quality.

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