



A Woman's Education

Jill Ker Conway

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The acclaimed author of the best-selling **The Road from Coorain** and **True North** now gives us the third book in her remarkable continuing memoir—describing the pleasures, the challenges, and the constant surprises (good and bad) of her years as the first woman president of Smith College.

The story opens in 1973 as Conway, unbeknownst to her, is first “looked over” as a prospective candidate by members of the Smith community, and continues as she assesses her passions and possibilities and agrees to the new challenge of heading the college in 1975. The jolt of energy she gets from being surrounded by several thousand young women enables her to take on the difficulties that arise in dealing with the diverse Smith constituencies—from the self-appointed protectors of the great male tradition of humanistic learning to the equally determined young feminists insisting on change. We see Conway juggling the needs and concerns of faculty, students, parents, trustees, and alumnae, and re-defining and redesigning aspects of the college to create programs in line with the new realities of women’s lives. We sense the urgency of her efforts to shape an institution that will attract students of the 1990s and beyond.

Through it all we see Jill Ker Conway coping with her husband’s illness, and learning to protect and sustain her inner self. As the end of a decade at Smith approaches, we see her realizing that she has both had her education and made her contributions, and that it is time now for her to graduate.

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