ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

GENERAL

From My Mother's Sleep
Ellen Mclean Smith
Ruth Truman
Lulu
978-1-4343-8026-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

As a mother and grandmother with a doctorate in education and a master's in counselling Ruth Truman is eminently qualified to write about campus life. The author also has forty years of experience as a United Methodist Church pastor's wife and seventeen as a teacher and university counsellor and administrator. Her novel *No Safe College* amply illustrates that she is an accomplished and insightful writer as well. Although it is fiction her book is "based on happenings from the lives of many students." It's a rewarding read for student services personnel and students in all university years but will especially benefit freshmen and their parents. In fact the story Truman uses as the vehicle for conveying her message is so well done and non-preachy that it will appeal to anyone interested in the tensions modern youth face once they leave home.

Truman's intent is to make prospective students and their parents aware of the pitfalls of attending any college even a Christian one like Callegua with its promise of "Education with a Difference." To do so she relates the adventures and misadventures of four dorm mates as they meet clash and attempt to resolve their differences. Joan is the naive narrator; Trish the focused Christian; Angie the moderate campus leader; and Sue is the football team's party girl. The mundane activities of college life are neatly interwoven into the main story lines which are told with the requisite amounts of suspense.

Poor girl Joan and rich girl Sue argue over clothing and hairstyles and Sue and Trish wrangle over issues of sex and morality. Angie tries to keep peace among them all until even she becomes frustrated with the extremes that Sue and Trish represent. Sheep-like Joan gets lead by Sue into uncomfortable even dangerous situations with football team louts including a near rape after an intake of drugs and alcohol. She is placed in situations that test her faith and her loyalty when one of her friends faces serious charges from the Student Disciplinary Council another has an abortion and one attempts suicide. Through everything thanks to Truman's

creativity Joan survives and develops into a mature young woman capable of making “choices that strung together created a life direction.”

When her daughter Jennie heads off to Callegua twenty-five years later Joan cautions her and the novel’s readers “Always remember there is no safe college. Remember that and you’ll do just fine.”

In the dedication for her novel Truman thanks her husband Reverend W. Lee Truman “who insisted this book be published.” It was excellent advice.

M. Wayne Cunningham