ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

BIOGRAPHY

Still Waters Run Deep
Derek Reeves
iUniverse
978-0-595-51807-4
Three Stars (out of Five)

Derek Reeves' superior intelligence as a child in East Harlem irritated his family and friends to no end. Despite his academic successes that eventually led him to Harvard and Princeton he was constantly criticized. He rebelled turning to truancy petty crime and drugs to seek recognition. Finding only more disappointment Reeves ultimately embraced religion and the pursuit of theological and legal studies. The title of his autobiography *Still Waters Run Deep* comes from a favorite saying of his father's and exemplifies his quest.

The author's writing style mixes academic and anecdotal strains and candidly bares his struggles to deal with his demons. With meticulous precision he recounts his achievements at school and his heartbreaks at home and elsewhere including out-of-state family vacations with jealous cousins. His frankness about his time in a psychiatric ward from which he escaped to a snow-covered street barefooted and skimpily clad is moving and reveals much about the conditions at the facility. His entire book in fact is a revealing look at the interactions of a dysfunctional family and the psychological impacts of guns gangs and young classmates' deaths in the multiracial community of Spanish Harlem.

Reeves' brother was envious of his scholastic achievements especially when he won "so many awards that [he] could hardly carry them all home." The author describes his father as a jealous domineering abusive alcoholic. Both parents wanted his academic life "erased from the face of the earth." Reeves himself was a mischievous film-loving child who grew to become "deceitful distrustful and devious to the point of becoming diabolical." His self-admitted paranoia brought him to the verge of depression and then to near suicide and is often evident in his complaints against his father and former girlfriends. His anger and frustration are readily exposed too especially towards his brother and again during two episodes of physical assault against women in later life. He was convicted and given a probationary sentence of three years—a serious setback for his life his career and the completion of his memoir.

Although the narrative of Reeves' book hits the occasional dry patch his story is

interesting and perceptive. Overall it meets the author's three goals for writing it: namely to satisfy his ongoing hunger for recognition to inspire those less fortunate than he and finally "to bear witness to the role of Christ's saving grace in my life."