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APPENDIXES

A. Synopsis of *My Brilliant Career*

My Brilliant Career tracks the life experiences of Sybylla Melvyn. Shows Sybylla Melvyn as a bold and happy little girl enjoying an ideal rural childhood. This golden period is followed by a series of disappointments. In either case, as Sybylla Melvyn grows, she grows away from her rural paradise due to a number of causes. Her adored father proves to be restless and incautious in his property deals, and moves the family to a less pleasant property. The world becomes less attractive to her, and her parents become less attractive to her also, because their circumstances get worse and because she begins to see them more clearly. Sybylla Melvyn is a sharp-eyed and unforgiving narrator, and recounts the weaknesses of those around her harshly. Her father's poor business dealings and thoughtless ambitions are harshly dealt with, as is her mother's worn gentility, and even more worn out temper.

As the oldest, misunderstood teenage daughter, the story recounts Sybylla Melvyn's trials. She must undertake uncongenial work for the family, and is deprived of culture in the form of reading and learning. It is Sybylla Melvyn who must retrieve her drunken father from the pub, and suffer embarrassments and humiliations. A brief reprieve comes when her genteel grandmother writes and asks her mother to send her to Caddagat, the childhood home of her mother, and she gets a taste of the higher life she has longed for – a world of reading, leisure, and a sympathetic environment.

This environment also offers romantic possibilities, particularly in the form of local wealthy landowner Harold Beecham. Yet, like any return to paradise, or a place that we have loved, it can't last, and when the family finances deteriorate, Sybylla Melvyn is recalled home by her mother and sent out to work as a poorly trained governess with the farcically named M'Swat family. There Sybylla Melvyn suffers horribly, and begs her refined aunt and grandmother at Caddagat to intervene with her mother on her behalf. Finally, in melodramatic fashion she comes down with 'nervous prostration', and must be returned to her family. Sybylla Melvyn is irritating, in the way that self-absorbed, self-pitying people are, when they are not ourselves or our best friends; but most readers still want her to be rescued from her situation, and one of the interesting things that the novel is the way that it ends.

Source : (<https://readingaustralia.com.au/essays/my-brilliant-career/> accessed on 10th May 2021)

B. Biography of Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin

Stella Maria Sarah Miles Franklin (1879-1954), writer, was born on 14 October 1879 at Talbingo, New South Wales, eldest child of native-born parents John Maurice Franklin, of Brindabella station, and his wife Margaret Susannah Helena, née Lampe, who was the great-granddaughter of Edward Miles (or Moyle) who had arrived with the First Fleet in the Scarborough with a seven years sentence for theft. *Childhood at Brindabella* (1963) illuminates Stella's first decade amongst pioneering families of the Monaro. She was educated at home and at Thornford Public School after 1889, when her family moved to Stillwater, an unrewarding small holding near Goulburn. That 1902 the family took up unspecified farming

enterprises at Cranebrook, near Penrith, and later at Chesterfield, and finally by 1915, giving up the land altogether, went to the modest south-west Sydney suburb of Carlton: her much diminished inheritance.

Downward mobility heightened Stella Franklin's pride and self-awareness, and contributed much to the making of Miles Franklin, nationalist, feminist and novelist. She readily appreciated her father's loss; shared hardships suffered especially by her more vigorous mother; and surmounted her own educational disadvantages proving thereafter an enterprising aspirant to literature. Her bush-bred talents were fostered by Charles Blyth, tutor at Brindabella, Thomas Hebblewhite of the Goulburn Evening Penny Post, and, after governing near Yass in 1897, the example of Charlotte Brontë. Writing, rather than teaching, nursing and Edward O'Sullivan's testimonials, delivered independence.

Without rejecting a marriage proposal from her relative Edwin Bridle in 1905, Franklin boldly embarked in the Ventura for the United States of America on 7 April 1906, intending to work as a 'Mary Ann', and publish at least one of the three manuscripts written since 1901, maybe *Some Everyday Folk* and *Dawn* (Edinburgh, 1909), set near Penrith. She arrived to the debris of the San Francisco earthquake. Her ill-documented first months in California appear to have been determined by a shipmate nurse of Seventh Day Adventist persuasion and letters of introduction to feminists from Vida Goldstein.

Franklin's responsibilities grew steadily: in 1908 she was, unofficially, part-time secretary to the league, from 1910 secretary at a salary of \$25 a week, in 1912 unofficially assistant editor to Alice Henry on its monthly journal, *Life and Labor*,

in 1913-14 co-editor and, briefly, editor in 1915. In her limited spare time she took singing and piano lessons. Something of those dynamic years on Dearborn Street, Chicago, may be gleaned from her little-known romance, *The Net of Circumstance*, published in London in 1915 under her pseudonym 'Mr and Mrs Ogniblat L'Artsau'. Of feminist and biographical significance, it was her only American-based creative work to be published. Miles Franklin now had two careers, both pursued full-pelt. Her ever-worrying health collapsed in 1912, shortly after her first visit in 1911 to England and France. Then in her early thirties, she redoubled her literary and political efforts. But she was increasingly unsettled, partly by the attentions of bright young men.

Exhausted, Franklin worked briefly at Margaret McMillan's crèche at Deptford, and 'kept the wolf from the door' as a cook at the Minerva Café, High Holborn, meanwhile ineffectually negotiating under male noms de plume with publishers or dabbling in journalism. In June 1917 she joined as a voluntary worker the 'American' Unit of the Scottish Women's Hospitals for Foreign Service stationed at Ostrovo, Macedonia, and commanded by Dr Agnes Bennett and Dr Mary De Garis, a stimulating but debilitating experience for 'Franky Doodle', orderly. She returned unwell to London in February 1918, apparently not enticed to stay by the possibility of a paid post as cook on a twelve month contract. An inquiry that joining the Women's Royal Air Force foreshadowed her enthusiasm for the air-based defence of Australia.

Family pressure, health and hope of 'Brent' brought her home in 1927, where she pursued her vocation by hiring a Hurstville hotel-room for typing, and eschewed

'tuft-hunters'. Between 1928 and 1931, Blackwoods published three of a projected nine-volume pastoral saga by 'Brent of Bin Bin'. The novels were well received and the little mystery of authorship exuberantly sustained until after her death by the author, her intimates and her publishers.

Miles Franklin openly feared death, which came with coronary occlusion on 19 September 1954 in hospital at Drummoyne. She was cremated with Anglican rites (she had been confirmed at All Saints Anglican Church, Collector, in 1894); busybodies removed relatives' wildflowers from her coffin. Her ashes were scattered on Jounama Creek, Talbingo. She left the residue of her estate, valued for probate at £8922, to found an award for Australian literature. Her vision survives in the annual Miles Franklin award (first won by Patrick White for *Voss* in 1957), her published work, the international screen success of *My Brilliant Career* (a development she anticipated for Australian novels in the 1930s), and in her voluminous papers, willed to the Mitchell Library, Sydney—a select archive of the paradoxes of Australian history and culture, of which she was a proud and challenging, but elusive, expression. She had proved 'a real hard doer', as they used to say up country.

Source : <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/franklin-stella-maria-sarah-miles-6235>
(accessed on 10th May 2021)