



# Her Brilliant Career: The Life of Stella Miles Franklin

*Jill Roe*

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Born in the Australian bush, Stella Miles Franklin became an international publishing sensation in 1901, at the age of 21, with *My Brilliant Career*, whose portrayal of an ambitious and independent woman defying social expectations still captivates readers. In a magisterial biography, Jill Roe details Miles' extraordinary life.

Early success launched Miles into influential literary and socialist circles in Sydney and Melbourne, where she met Banjo Paterson (composer of "Waltzing Matilda" and author of *The Man from Snowy River*) and suffragist Vida Goldstein (who introduced her to Christian Science). Researching the lives of working women, Miles disguised herself as a domestic for a year. She then lit out for adventure abroad, landing in San Francisco just after the Great Earthquake. At Jane Addams' Hull House in Chicago, she joined the women's labor movement, working for the National Women's Trade Union League and writing for its magazine.

Moving to Britain in 1915, Miles joined the war cause and served in Macedonia as a hospital orderly and then worked in London for various feminist and progressive causes, including the National Housing Council. Always she wrote, becoming a prolific author of plays as well as novels and archetypal bush stories. Returning to Australia in the 1930s, she supported women's causes and promoted Australian writers, leaving her estate to endow the nation's premier literary award.

The culmination of decades of research in thousands of papers left by Miles, *Her Brilliant Career* stands as the definitive life of this remarkable writer and feminist.

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