

# THE CAREER WOMAN

BY LLOYD NELSON

## ONE

Miriam is sitting comfortably in the Albert Hall. London is full of top flight people at this summer season. The lawn season of Wimbledon, Ascot, Lords and Glyndebourne.

Yvonne Kenny is just finishing a very exquisite rendition of 'Ah Sweet Mystery of Life'. Yvonne's getting a tad big around the hips, but she can surely sing. She's a star in Australia but apart from London on occasion, she's never made it big in the European scene.

Gerald English on the second microphone is up next and he swings straight into a very fine effort of 'The English Rose' (Dan Cupid Hath a Garden). Anything less like Dan Cupid than Gerald is hard to imagine, what's the bet he's a bachelor. But he does it well.

The huge man Bryn Tewfil is on the third mike. As soon as Gerald finishes his sprightly effort Bryn is going to essay Lockton & Murray's classic 'I'll walk beside you'. Bryn has a voice that would spring roof nails in a shearing shed and he is the real reason for the packed house here tonight.

Miriam has been here before. On the last memorable occasion she is brought along by a very, very amorous and titled Guard's Officer, who seems to play sex like numbers. Anyway, after making his wishes clear when the house lights are dimmed, they finish their evening recklessly making love on the lawns behind the Hyde Park Statue of Albert.

Miriam's dry cleaner back home complains how hard it is to get the grass stains out of her fine croyd suit.

"Whatever were you doing" he asks?

"Oh" Miriam says, "laying on the lawn at Wimbledon after eating stawbs and cream."

"What? In a croyd suit" he says?

Things are very different this time. Miriam's a Mummy now and seated between her husband and his grown up son. They are all beautifully dressed, a nanny is looking after the bub and after the concert they are going on to Annabelle's to dine and dance before returning to the solid luxury of Claridge's. They are hardly slumming it in London at this expensive time of year.

They are enjoying the magnificent English summer, not a trace of rain.

## TWO

Miriam casts her mind back to Australia, bitterly cold June days on the farm.

They farm at Penola in South Australia, close to the big centres or bigger centres of Naracoorte to the north, Mount Gambier to the south. Sheep and wheat, though her Dad is also a weight and grade pig buyer at the sales. He runs scales at the sales and buys at a set rate. The pig market gets a bit rigged at times, depending on buyers on the day and he does well

by buying at pre set prices. The purchases are shipped the same day by train to the firm he buys for.

Miriam in her school days was a rather bitchy type, a strong personality, but not without humour. She has endless long legs, good breasts, poor hair (you can't have everything), plays hockey hard and is prominent in her Methodist Church Fellowship.

Most of the girls are endlessly preoccupied with the unknown 'It'. They know absolutely nothing, but never stop talking about 'It'.

'It' never rates a mention with Miriam. They say to her "Miriam you never mention 'It'. Are you frigid or are you lesbian or what? It's not natural to take no interest in 'It'.

Miriam sighs. "Do try, try to get your minds above your crutch girls" she admonishes them.

"Spoil sport" they cry.

What they don't, of course, know is that Miriam knows all about 'It'. She is having a marvellous sex life, without doubt the best and most interesting in the district bar none with two young and virile men.

She discovers 'It' one day when she returns home via the school bus to the gates, bikes to the homestead. Discovers, as she oh so quietly comes into the farmhouse via the covered back veranda, that the floor is strewn with the maroon dyed army uniform worn by the Italian Prisoners of War working on their and many other district farms at this late stage of World War II.

One of the two prisoners is in at the local pig sale. Dad usually takes Joe to run the scales, he's numerate and speaks English well. He leaves Mario, who works at looking rough and is not very intelligible, to carry on with farm work.

Miriam is no fool, she is all woman at heart and as quick as a flash she realises the decibels of sound emanating from her Mum's bedroom are cries of ecstasy, not pain.

She quietly walks over in her sport sandshoes to the nearby shed and sets up and gets going on her homework.

After a while Mario walks over and is a bit gob smacked to find her quietly and discreetly working away. Mario today is clean shaven and looks like Edward Purdom. He is a very handsome man, especially when he's shaved off his face.

"Miriam" he says, "what are you doing here?"

She takes her natural grit in her hand and says, "I've been discreetly keeping out of the way while I think you have been bulling my mother. Furthermore, for my silence, I think you can bull me."

He backs and fills and prevaricates and then completely takes the wind out of Miriam's overconfident sails by saying in flawless and unaccented English, "Miriam we Italian's know, if the world doesn't, that as a woman approaches the menopause she is completely driven by her urges. The body is saying get pregnant before it's too late and the natural urges follow (Mum is 42)."

"God Mario what if you get her pregnant?"

Mario is well aware of the state of the War and he is also aware that transport back to Italy will occur quickly at War's end when empty troop ships head for the Northern Hemisphere to bring the Aussie troops home.

“Well Miriam” he says, “she’s being reckless and I can only hope that I’m soon heading for home before she starts showing.”

Miriam’s curiosity runs a bit further. “Mario, what’s with the perfect English?”

He laughs, “I was reading Philosophy at the English speaking Uni at Perugia when I got bagged up for the Army. Dad’s a manufacturer, big supporter of Il Duce. They make me a Lieutenant and send me off to North Africa. Things go well and then pear shaped. The Afrika Corp get so unhappy with our performance they start shooting every ninth officer to stiffen up the foot sloggers. I jump ship, take the dog tags off a dead tall soldier and walk into the 8<sup>th</sup> Army Perimeter and here I am, safe, well fed, my every need catered for.”

“That’s as may be” Miriam says, “but I want sex.”

“And you shall have it, but not today” he says. “Your Mummy has plumb worn me out.”

### THREE

Over the next few weeks he settles in to teach Miriam everything she needs to know in the man, woman line. He’s a good choice and a marvellous teacher, they click and click and arouse no suspicion by being quite circumspect on when and where.

After three weeks Mario says, “it’s now time to bring Joe into the equation.”

Miriam gulps. “Are you sure, he’s quite big? I don’t know? Is he involved with Mum too?”

“Oh not at all” Mario says, “He’s looking after your Auntie Mona.”

Mona’s husband is in the Army but within Australia. They farm a couple of farms over and Miriam’s Dad runs, with the prisoners help, this and his farm and that of Miriam’s cousin, whose husband is now a Prisoner of War in Germany, after the Crete debacle.

Miriam is a bit amazed about Aunt Mona. She’s a sister of Mum, they have imperious profiles that would have graced a Roman coin. The thought of these proud and starchy women bedding or being bedded by the foreign help is a bit mind blowing.

In pillow talk with Mario, Miriam finds his Dad’s a Milan textile manufacturer, tight with Benito Mussolini. Mario thought this would have saved him from the War, but it wasn’t to be. Considering that Mussolini caused his sophisticated son in law, Count Ciano to be executed in Verona Prison, it probably wasn’t ever likely that Mario would get immunity from the stoush.

Joe now enters the bucolic farm happenings and Miriam has to run quite hard as Mario stays in the Ménage De Trios too.

Partly in self defence she broadens the triangle to bring in her redheaded grass widow farming cousin.

This girl married on her hub’s embarkation leave, had 10 days of ‘It’ and he hasn’t been back since and is dying to renew the experience. Her eyes glaze as young schoolgirl Miriam tells her about her usual evening life (she sneaks out late, late).

The redhead says "bring it on, bring it on" and then stopping, "my God you'll get pregnant."

"No" says Miriam, "these clever sods seem to have an endless supply of safers."

"But it's wartime" the girl says. "Everything's rationed. I've had a signal from a neighbour but had to wave it off. Couldn't get hold of the necessary, dammit."

"Well" Miriam says, "the all seeing War Department, which look after the soldiers, keeps these guys protected it seems in the interests of avoiding World War III."

Miriam brings over the prisoners to the redhead's on the pretext of doing a garden makeover. The chaps confer with both girls. They organise for the redhead to serve afternoon tea topless and for Miriam to busy herself in the garden and they will (with apologies to Miriam) get down to tin tacks. And so it goes, the redhead, weak and wobbly at the knees, is ecstatic.

"Jesus" this Methodist girl says, "what an experience. I've had my first orgasm or perhaps three or four. I had absolutely no idea it could be this good, let's keep it rolling."

Thus the Italians contribute to the erotic life of the area. Miriam's Mum and Auntie Mona get pregnant. They blame their husbands, of course, as Mum has been nice to Dad for a change and Auntie Mona has wisely chivvied her husband into leave at the farm.

Mum will have no problems as Mario is very fair and blue eyed, much as she is, but Mona, childless to now, may have a problem if an olive skinned, brown liquid eyed bub turns up. A throw back perhaps?

But also with a crash the War ends, the Army gears up its troop transports and an endless stream of Prisoners of War go down to Adelaide to embark for the northward run. Life becomes, after the fond farewells, very, very, very dull. Although the pregnancies of the senior women are interesting.

## FOUR

Miriam's libido starts missing the activity and skills of the young Dings within weeks. She casts around to find who can fill her needs and applies the method acting training, aimed at seducing anyone, taught her by the former, over some weeks using a variety of scenarios.

They say "don't essay anyone over about 28, they have too much to lose after that and get all honourable if they think they may get found out. Just keep in mind, if he's late twenties it's not worth the chance of a rebuff. But, however, if you are trying for an older man for any reason here are a couple of sure fire ploys."

Thus Miriam goes out with a few of the local boys, she finds this a waste of time as she is constrained by family to Methodist or perhaps a Baptist boy or two and they are all too young and green for her needs. Eventually she employs her older male training on the new Methodist Pastor.

He's a late vocation Minister, was a cane cutter in Northern Queensland prior. She plies her ploy and envelopes him in a flash in the Manse when organising a Sunday school concert with him. Their coupling is not leisurely, he wants to grab what's going before it gets away on him, or before his timid willowy wife springs them.

It's all go and go, limited only by the legitimate opportunities to get together. Miriam also, through the Church involvement, contemplates seducing the new Anglican Curate, nice looking, Cambridge educated, but he gets the message, but shies like a frightened horse. Keep away from the educated ones the Dings have told her and they're right.

Because she is skilled at turning her prospects on and moves with great expertise and the speed of light, Miriam runs along to her own satisfaction.

## FIVE

School ends, she joins the local Farmer's Store Office as Under Manager or rather she gravitates from new office girl to Under Manager quickly by natural aptitude and getting her mind off sex in working hours.

She tends to pass on the girlish activities of the district, doesn't worry much about dancing, thinks this is, at best, a vertical preliminary to a horizontal intention and having the Methodist Minister providing discreetly the horizontal bit, she doesn't fling a wider net, although she plays hockey as a forward hard.

She also picks up a couple of bad habits from the Methodist Minister and is not adverse to smoking a cheroot or two or having a snort of Vodka (doesn't show up on the breath the Minister insists). She never gets sprung at any of these extra curricular activities although she has some very, very close shaves.

Much of her free time goes into the upbringing of Mario's and her Mum's child, a beautiful blonde baby boy. He's a very, very handsome and agreeable child, much like his Dad.

The aged Federal Member of Parliament for their area tossed his hand in and in a four way endorsement for the seat (common in those days) her Dad is elected the Country Party Member, sets up a local office in Penola and Naracoorte and goes to Canberra.

## SIX

Miriam then leaves the Store and goes into the Federal payroll as Electorate Secretary complete with a helper.

Because things have been War static, by the end of her Dad's first term Bob Menzies has climbed back into power and to everyone's very great surprise carried Dad along with him as the Coalitions nomination as Federal Treasurer.

They thus overnight became quite real powers in the land and with the younger son now old enough to carry the farming on, they move lock stock to Canberra retaining a house in Penola to stay at key times of the year and to thus keep base with the people that have done so much to put them up so high.

Miriam enjoys Canberra. Learns to ski and cuts back on her key Electorate Secretary role. There's plenty of Federal money for more helpers, so she goes to the Australian National University and does languages and commerce. She focuses on this and finding home life and study distracting, with her half brother's noisy activities and not being able to bring a male

home, she rents a very nice unit, more of an apartment really, views of Burley Griffin and Black Mountain.

Dad, as Federal Treasurer, is taking an interest in the career of John Healey, Assistant Minister for Trade. Healey, a fourth generation polly, they've been in Canberra since it was invented. Healey wants to focus in on opportunities for wool hides and grain and also Australian gemstones in the northern part of Italy.

Northern Italy, particularly the Milan based conglomerates, are now the powerhouse of the region and are booming along, but they don't give Australian raw products much of a tumble, they are supporting the Argentine and Chile in lieu.

Dad tells John that his elder daughter has graduated with Honours from A.N.U. and is also a linguist.

Healey invites Miriam around and tells her of his aims, admires the general look of her (and she is good looking) and offers her induction to his Department, without going through the long and slow formal channels.

She accepts and by default gets a quick run at the northern Italian opportunities when the person currently handling this quits to nurse her sick Mother. She is generous in handing over all the details and the more promising prospects.

"Climb the ladder as quick as you can Miriam" she says. "Don't stay a few rungs down, it's too easy for the ones above to crap on you that way. With your qualifications and looks you should be able to make quick progress, especially with what I've been working hard on and which I'm now passing on to you, rather than hiding it in the files as is the usual wont when a newy comes in."

## SEVEN

Thus Miriam hits the ground running and is soon writing beautifully phrased and typed letters to the prospects given her by her predecessor.

She is also angling to put together a Trade Delegation Agenda for the northern autumn, when everybody wants to go somewhere and then to England to catch the last of the tourist type weather in the old Dart.

A number of interrogatory type letters come back, enquiring about this and that and then payola (perhaps) with a very deep letter from the Rossi Corporation in Milan.

They say, in effect, that they are interested in Miriam's proposals, are busy people, not give to spending time with trade mission junkets, but are quite prepared to meet with Ms McKendrick and the Minister for a one day discussion at their Milan headquarters and suggesting that if the Minister is going on they will hold Ms McKendrick over another day for final detail and that hopefully the outcome sought by both parties can be fully achieved

This, of course, suits the Assistant Minister as he wants to go to London. Thus he and Miriam fly out of Canberra together and go international from Sydney on. No helpers but brief cases loaded with submissions.

The Assistant Minister is a nice whimsical guy. He farms in New England and is married to a good Methodist girl (like Miriam used to be). They stop over in Athens for a break and Miriam flies the signals. After a day's sightseeing out to Delphi in a bus where the windows run into the roof,

to provide great views of the great mountains, he is very receptive and settles for sex and room service in his suite at the Bretagne. He's sweet but is he backward, it takes all of Miriam's extensive womanly wiles, well honed over quite a few years from an early start, to get him past the missionary position, but does he take to it.

"Wherever, wherever did you learn that" he says? "What an education."

"Oh, it's just natural" Miriam says. "All women know these things."

"Jesus Miriam" he says. "If you're right my wife's been holding out on me from the start."

Miriam shudders to think of the result when he tries what they are gleefully doing on with his demure little wife back home in Oz. Someone is in for either a delightful surprise or perhaps a rude shock, the way he's approaching it.

They set to again the next night in Rome.

"Buggar the Trevi Fountain" he says. "Let's go to bed now, we can eat later."

## EIGHT

At 11.30 a.m. next day they are in the chrome and steel of the Rossi Corporation in Milan. These guys are the movers and shakers of Northern Italy. Research indicates that they were top-flight supporters of Mussolini, but were commercially smart enough to see the light just in time. The elder son and heir apparent was killed at Anzio and a younger son has now capably stepped in, or so our Intel says on our concise briefing papers.

We step into the Board Room to meet these people. The Assistant Minister looks a tad jaded but he is a performer (in several ways now) and is beautifully suited. Miriam knows she looks the berries in her pencil slim gun metal grey suit and white cleaved blouse, she's smugly satisfied, all sexual tensions banished for a day or three.

As she steps forward her jaw drops and she nearly loses it as Mario, (Eduardo in real life) the ex Prisoner of War, teacher extraordinaire of all matters sexual, steps forward to give Miriam a shoulder hug and a kiss.

"Miriam" he says in that exciting voice of his, "it's been far too long. I want you to meet my Dad."

Miriam's never been more devastated in her life and doesn't expect she ever will be again. Rossi Senior, another Edward Purdom look alike, but older, steps up, takes Miriam's hand and gives her a kiss.

"Miriam" he says, "I have heard just so much about you, but you defy even Eduardo's glowing description, come now, let us have a drink and we'll lunch right here in the Board Room."

When Miriam gets over the shock she relaxes and enjoys the fun. They explain all round and Miriam gets her quite functional Italian on the go. Young Eduardo is quite impressed and tosses some very bawdy Italian at her, she blushes.

"Why I taught you that on the farm" he says, "but you've polished up the rough edges."

They lunch, starting on grilled prawns and a biting little provincial wine. They breeze through the mains accompanied by ruby coloured wine and finish on hard little Swiss goat's cheese and a very fine port.

They keep going to late afternoon. It's extremely pleasant all round and Miriam basks in the appreciative emanations from the Minister and both of the Rossi's.

The Minister departs to catch his late afternoon London flight from Milan Airport. Rossi Senior goes with him to point out the sights and to see him off. It's quite an honour to the Minister as Rossi Senior is very heavy metal.

Back in the Board Room, Eduardo and Miriam drink each other in. They've both put on a bit of weight here and there but it adds to both their attractive personas.

"Eduardo" Miriam says, "I was all screwed out when I arrived."

"The Minister" he says, "of course. Well I would hope so, what a career enhancing opportunity my dear. You gave him, I hope, a very pleasant time?"

"Well yes" Miriam says.

"Well now" he says, "we'll call in the Australian Charge tomorrow and he can witness the signing up of our Trade Deals and then I thought we can go up to a charming Inn in the Dolomites near Cortina. Joe is going to join us there, so you will need all your stamina."

"Bang on" Miriam says.

All of this happens. After three days Miriam begins to feel she will never have a sexual tension attack again in her life.

The boys certainly give her a good time and they similarly have extended their repertoire quite a bit. She learns fresh things to teach the Minister and a couple that she thinks she'd better not teach him.

Despite her experience, it's quite a thorough re-education.

Joe asks Miriam, "What about your redheaded cousin? Gosh she was red all over and very exciting."

Eduardo cuts in. "She was nearly as good as your Mum Miriam. I had a letter from her (Mum) only this week, with pictures of our son."

This bastard indeed knows everything.

"How did you get together in the first place?" Miriam asks and he tells her.

The upshot of this very jolly and demanding week is that Miriam takes back to Oz with her return Air Italia tickets for herself and the redheaded cousin. Date to be determined.

She returns to the Trade Department to be feted and congratulated and accoladed by all and sundry.

"What a great brain you have Miriam" they say, little knowing that it is the other end that brought home the bacon.

The Assistant Minister sends around a dozen red long stemmed roses and rings her late afternoon from Gooniwindi. What about tomorrow night when he's back in town?

Miriam's feeling a bit winded from air travel and her hard days in Italy, so she puts him back until Thursday. These guys fly in and out and out is usually Thursday, but she feels quite up to inconveniencing him a tad.

Thursday she plays him a bit harder and suggests perhaps he can find enough Departmental work to keep him in Canberra for the weekend. She's

like Hemingway fishing in the gulf stream. She's got the hook in and is now contemplating reeling him in close enough to get the gaff in and gaff him. She does and runs him ragged over a period of some days.

Sunday night he says, "I've never had anything like it ever."

"I should think not" Miriam thinks to herself. She's never exerted herself so much or so often, in recent times. Besides, she's getting a bit sore.

They now set into a torrid affair in which they can't get enough of each other. He stays in Canberra most weekends, gets a bit of a reputation as a workaholic. Wifey comes down to see what's taking up his time, it's a while since he's been home.

Perhaps the wife gets intrigued with the Minister's new skills. We may never know, as interesting as it is, they cool things down for a while.

Miriam talks to the redheaded cousin who is absolutely champing at the bit and they fly over to Milan. It's taken a while to organise a date that doesn't conflict with their obligations to their wives and mistresses. The latter like to finish the year strong and the wives like to take their husbands to the lakes or beaches for August.

They fly to Milan and the boys take the redhead up to Cortina for a week. She tells them she wants to go home pregnant and has scheduled the dates accordingly. She realises she will not become pregnant by her husband after his war troubles and wants to push on with life.

They leave Miriam in Milan and Eduardo Senior comes around to where she is staying.

"Miriam" he says, "the boys neglect of you is unforgivable. What about dinner at Toscas and then I have tickets for Callas, who will be laying the multitudes in the aisles tonight, at La Scala. Shall we?"

Things move on. The redhead writes months later saying "Bingo and God knows which of the two terribles are responsible. Hopefully it will be twins."

Miriam reads the letter on the terrace of the Villa Respighi, just down the hill a bit from Somerset Maugham's famous old Villa at Cap Ferat. Miriam actually owns the Villa, Eduardo gave her the deeds only last Friday.

Miriam's as pregnant as all get out.

The head maid Anna comes out of the French doors.

"Eduardo is coming home for lunch" she says and she says (archly) "for a relaxing afternoon."

Miriam grins and a tad later Eduardo comes in the door. He's wearing a fabulous white linen suit that only the Italian's can carry off.

He's so handsome, and what a man, mano, mano.

Miriam thinks, "I'm as happy as happy and perhaps" she thinks, "it should be explained that it's Eduardo Senior whom she has married.