

## Flamboyant: Carole Ingram

*Based on a true story.*

I was sitting in the lounge of a first-class hotel in Sydney with my friend Jeffrey, listening to a band play. I couldn't help but notice a flamboyant man dressed immaculately in a bright blue jacket, cream pants, and matching shoes smiling at us. When I smiled back, he made his way over to introduce himself.

"Hello, I am Callam. May I sit with you awhile? I am part of this show. Are you enjoying it?" He invited us to a show he was conducting next week.

Unable to attend, Jeffery remarked, "It's you he wanted to go, Carole. So you should! He is a character. It will take you down a fun path." And it did.

It turned out he was a showman, comedian and actor. While onstage, he also showcased his brand of showmanship. Halfway through the show, the audience was in stitches from his humour.

There was a moment when he looked lost. It was at that moment I realized he had forgotten his lines. He quickly pivoted to a different humorous performance, and the audience never suspected he had early Dementia. It was brilliant. I witnessed this many times over the next few months.

Callam would comment positively on my clothing style. He would also give me suggestions for improvement. He was always spot on. His innate confidence was just part of who he was.

One Sunday, I visited Callam in his classy retirement village.

"Hi Carole, I guess you are here to see Callam," said Rose, the receptionist. "He has gone to the bottle shop for wine to take to an upcoming event he is compèring. He is quite a character; his eccentric, flamboyant nature keeps us entertained."

"Thanks, Rose. I will drive down to the bottle shop."

Callam, dressed immaculately in a classy Dior red jacket, white slacks, and matching shoes, smiled as he came out of the shop with four bottles of French Champagne. "Hi, Carole. Let me introduce you to my friends; they kindly drove me here. The bus was taking too long, so I waved them down."

Michael, the friendly-faced man at the steering wheel, was amused by the situation.

"Hi Carole, pleased to meet you," Michael said. "We were happy to give Callum a lift. It's not every day such an eloquent man is found hitchhiking. I believe he is an entertainer."

"Yes, he certainly is on and off stage."

"I believe you," Michael said.

Callum offered Michael a \$60 bottle of Champagne and invited the whole family to his next show.

"Thanks, mate", Michael said, chuckling; "it's been an unusual experience but an enjoyable one."

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