



A Very Private Eye: An Autobiography in Diaries and Letters

Barbara Pym

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‘Could one write a book based on one’s diaries over thirty years? I certainly have enough material,’ wrote Barbara Pym. This book, selected from the diaries, notebooks and letters of this much loved novelist to form a continuous narrative, is indeed a unique autobiography, providing a privileged insight into a writer’s mind.

Philip Larkin wrote that Barbara Pym had ‘a unique eye and ear for the small poignancies of everyday life’. Her autobiography amply demonstrates this, as it traces her life from exuberant times at Oxford in the thirties, through the war when, scarred by an unhappy love affair, she joined the WRNS, to the published novelist of the fifties. It also deals with the long period when her novels were out of fashion and no one would publish them, her rediscovering in 1977, and the triumphant success of her last few years.

It is now possible to describe a place, situation or person as ‘very Barbara Pym’. *A Very Private Eye*, at once funny and moving, shows the variety and depth of her own story.

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