



The Unexpected Professor: An Oxford Life in Books

John Carey

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Best known for his provocative take on cultural issues in *The Intellectuals and the Masses* and *What Good Are the Arts?*, John Carey describes in this warm and funny memoir the events that formed him - an escape from the London blitz to an idyllic rural village, army service in Egypt, an open scholarship to Oxford and an academic career that saw him elected, age 40, to Oxford's oldest English Literature professorship.

He frankly portrays the snobberies and rituals of 1950s Oxford, but also his inspiring meetings with writers and poets - Auden, Graves, Larkin, Heaney - and his forty-year stint as a lead book-reviewer for the *Sunday Times*.

This is a book about the joys of reading - in effect, an informal introduction to the great works of English literature. But it is also about war and family, and how an unexpected background can give you the insight and the courage to say the unexpected thing.

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